EVENINGS ON THE THAMES;

OR,

Serene Hours,

AND WHAT THEY REQUIRE.

BY

KENELM HENRY DIGBY.

——— οὐ μέν τι κασιγνήτοιο χερείων
Γίνεται ὅς κεν, ἑταῖρος ἐὼν, πεπνυμένα εἰδῇ.
Od. θ. 585.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

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CHAPTER X.

PAGE

To an Osier Desert between Teddington and Kingston. *Subject*—That a love for what is common is requisite for the enjoyment of serene hours 1

CHAPTER XI.

To the Eel-Pie Island. *Subject*—That a love of justice, toleration, and loyalty are requisite for the same object . . 44

CHAPTER XII.

To Eton Meadows. *Subject*—That a recognition of the supremacy of mind is conducive to the same object . . . 75

CHAPTER XIII.

To the "Five Bells" at Ouzeley, and Windsor. *Subject*—That humility in regard to philosophic questions is requisite for the same object 116

CHAPTER XIV.

To the Island near Strawberry Hill. *Subject*—That the absence of pedantry and of the spirit of exaggerated criticism is requisite for the same object 143

CHAPTER XV.

PAGE

To Fulham and Putney. *Subject*—That the absence of certain immoderate and also of erroneous views on matters of religion is conducive to the same object 196

CHAPTER XVI.

To Petersham Meadows. *Subject*—That an acquiescence in the ancient principles and practices of organized Christianity is conducive to the same object 310

CHAPTER XVII.

To the Banks above Pope's Grotto at Twickenham. *Subject*—That a love of moderation is requisite for the same object 446

CHAPTER XVIII.

From London Bridge to Westminster. *Subject*—That resignation is requisite for the same object 469

CHAPTER XIX.

To Ditton. *Subject*—That the love of God, promoted by all the qualifications hitherto demanded in order to realize the same object, conduces mainly of itself to secure its fulfilment 511

ERRATUM.

Page 9, line 35, *for* moineaus *read* moineaux.

EVENINGS ON THE THAMES,

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&c.

CHAPTER X.

IT was an eventful hour for some young people when they started on a river excursion, the skiff being bound for a certain promised island half-way between Teddington Lock and Kingston, which proved, however, to be a continent washed by the narrow winding stream that passes behind the island a little below Hamchurch, which every one knows, or ought to know, is the name given to a vast elm-tree that stands solitary where the road to that village leaves the towing-path. The river here is deep from shore to shore, the stream moderate, the Middlesex side shaded by willows, fringed with reeds and other aquatic plants, delicious to float along enjoying the shade with some one who can be serene when a July sun shines. Within a short distance of town there is no reach of the river more solitary or delightful. On this occasion, when the gathering was rather large and promiscuous, the order of the day seemed to be noise and every one for himself. It would be long to tell of the swimming accelerated by an invasion, or, rather, by the stout and legitimate resistance of a republic of ants, who riddled them as thick as honeycombs, each pinch more stinging under water than the ants that made them; all this passing near the Prince

of Wales's barge after the little people had been put ashore, merely, of course, as they were told, to gather daffodils along the opposite bank; and let me add,—in a parenthesis, for all close thinkers, you know, as Coleridge says, "are apt to be parenthetic," the said barge, to jump into the water from, with all its poor tackling, at which every boy that passes can have a pull with as much full possession for the moment as our beloved young Prince himself enjoys, is the most innocent-looking unprotected sort of thing to be an integral part of royal property that any one can wish to see on a summer's day. It would be longer still to relate all the details of juvenile ecstasy elicited by the run after a long sitting, and by the pretty rather than sweet poesies which they gathered. One might describe then the reunion of the boat's company when the swimmers, having resumed their oars, pulled after the flower-girls and the giants that accompanied them, and ferried them across to the grassy spot amidst the stumps of osier, where, in despite of another colony of ants, it was settled they should dine,—or rather, I should say, in order to adopt a loftier style after the fashion of René d'Anjou, where all this rowing, which is a kind of joust and tournament, might be interrupted by "un gracieux répas pris sans mélancolie"—as Louis de Beauvau qualified that dinner on the grass, taken on the 6th of June, 1449, when a similar party were playing at shepherds on the meadow, below the Castle of Tarascon*. Well, however you may qualify it, truly gracious was the repast now, there not being one of the company who was not ready that hour at least to say with Ergasilus in the Captives, "Nothing does me good that I eat at home; even that ever so little which I taste out of doors, the same refreshes me." Here, for the moment, one would desire to live like some of the Libyan nomades that one hears about, "having no other possessions than a cup and a ewer,"—for I would leave out the sword, "nasty thing,"—and "having small houses made of the stalks of asphodel, merely just to serve as a shade, and carrying them about with them wherever they go†." Your pic-nic, after all, is an old-fashioned thing, and very classical, let me tell you

* De Villeneuve Bargemont, Hist. de R. d'Anjou, tom. ii. 55.

† Athen. xi.

If you cared to hear it, one might talk to you about the *συναγώγιμα δεῖπνα*, as Alexis does in his Nymphs, where he says,

> "Come, sit you down, and call those damsels in;
> We've got a pic-nic here*."

You might find yourself to be turning out quite an Homeric character, helping to wait, perhaps boasting like Ulysses of being a capital hand at cutting up meat, and insisting, as you will be, on an equal division of that which is to appease the hunger of the whole party,—the very word in Greek for a feast being derived from the word 'to divide,' just as you are now dividing the food placed on the grass on which you are sitting†; though, of course, no one in parties like ours objects to such equity; since we are never like the Argonauts, when one of the company, Hercules, used to consume for his own portion half the provisions, which was one of the reasons assigned why Jason grew weary at last of having him on board, and so left him while ashore on the road to pursue their voyage without him. Stinted as we are in vessels, as, indeed, on such occasions the best company generally is in every thing, for we are not like the party from Florence, that used to be served in such a sumptuous manner, on the green lawns, with every curious and dainty thing that was costly, and elegant, and superfluous,—put to our shifts, in fact, as I might say in reference to our own style of restorative entertainment, perhaps some one might shame us all by describing the Lagynophoria, when each one used to drink out of his own flagon which he had brought from home with him‡. But come, fall to, none of us with our parched lips are fastidious. And at all events, it is not with us now as it was with the English in Amiens, when Louis XI. feasted them, and as Philippe de Commines says, "d'eau n'estoit nouvelles;" though, by the way, it had been better for them on that occasion, as it turned out, according to the testimony of old chronicles, if there had been news of water, and even if they had all stolen a march on time and been teetotallers, with a band of Hope at their head. Upon the whole, I rather think that such historical allusions, when used in reference to our present proceedings, will gene-

* Athen. viii. † Id. i. ‡ Id. vii.

rally be found to reflect, as in this instance, credit on ourselves and on our dear contemporaries. There might be amusement reflecting it even in hearing about the dislike which your old Deipnosophists entertained for cold dishes, which no one, they said, could eat*, of whom Athenæus tells the anecdote of one who, being asked how he liked what was set before him, answered, without fearing to commit a bad joke, "It is cold; take it away. I don't want to eat any orators." But in this matter of erudition among the rushes, we shall be content with hearing one instance that is found in the Greek Anthology; only, as you read, make proper substitutions thus:—I do not, Philotherus, wish to banquet in the city or west end, but in the field, delighted with the breath of zephyrs. A slight bed—read boat-cushion—strewn on the ground is sufficient for me, for near is the couch of a willow and the osier, the ancient garland of the Carians. But, let wine—read beer—be brought, and the lyre of the Muses—alias a cornet—so that while drinking what cheers the soul, or at least strengthens the rower's arms, we may sing the renowned, not goddess as the blind heathen said, but queen, the guardian of our island home. Well, even for such a feast, some ingenuity is elicited to make all comfortable. Youth has still need of energy, and a certain credulity in its own unexhausted resources, when the stroke has to wait at table, and bow-oar to act kitchen-maid washing the plates in the river. However, leaving all this, and much besides untold, but to be supposed by the intelligent reader, for "sooth my wit suffise: nought thereto to tellen all," let us come at once to the suggestion which the spectacle of such innocent joys must always yield,—that to be happy requires but little, and that which is most common.

The subject for our thoughts on this day's excursion, though discussed at length elsewhere, as one may be reminded by some considerate friend slily and ambiguously saying,

"Souvien-toi de ton livre, et de son peu de bruit,"

will not be wanting in interest to those who have acquired the spirit and turn of mind recommended in these last disputations.

* Athen. viii.

Don't I remember, forsooth? let him repeat his question as often as he likes. I should think I did. Though the incisions did not prove fatal in my case as in other instances that poets hear about, such cutting things are not forgotten in a hurry; but, without courting a return of similar amenities, or, indeed, without treading over an inch of the same ground gone over then, I must venture to suggest on the present occasion that, however some wise people may shake their heads, we are ready to maintain stoutly that an inclination and a capacity for appreciating and enjoying common things constitute an element essential to those sweet happy moments of serenity of which the attainment is the object of all these rows and walks; while the service is reciprocal, the custom of such enjoyment nourishing a taste for those common things of which, after all is said and done, we were intended to breathe the atmosphere.

In the first place, though Ben Jonson, in presence of Queen Elizabeth, would try to have it otherwise, speaking forsooth of "the hallow'd bowels of the silver Thames," our poor old river, and this is a very profound remark, is a common river that has no silly pretensions like the Nile, the Meander, the Ganges, the Achelous, the Ilissus, the Clitumnus, and I know not how many others, to be any thing else. We can cross it without offering sacrifices or making invocations; we can wash our hands in it, and bathe in it, without paying tribute; and in brief do just what we like with it, which is a privilege for which we should be grateful when we think of what the Egyptians, Persians, Phrygians, Indians, Greeks, and Latins had to pay for having to do with rivers that wanted to be extraordinary and sublime*. Then again, clearly

> "Our revels want the state and glory
> With which the court delights might charm your senses,
> Our scene is natural, but interpret fairly,
> 'Twas meant a cure for time's sick feathers, and
> Your mirth."

> "Do not think it then unmeet
> To stoop with hands beneath thy feet."

* Sur le Culte des Divinitez des Eaux. Hist. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. vi. 40.

True, the songs heard here are in general very common songs, often such, as, caught first in music-halls, cheer the laborious population for months after, as they sing or whistle the simple air while working; but they tell of the gladness of this green earth; they are songs that lowliest hearts can feel, as when we hear,

"I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighbourhoods."

Insensibly, I know not how, a love for common things is a general result of such expeditions. In fact their very nature and conditions seem to involve it; for, on occasions of this kind, being put to the test, were we to shrink back from the trial, our names and standing would be lost for ever; and let me tell you to be able to do all that is expected from us—

αἰσχυνόμενοι φάτιν ἀνδρῶν, ἠδὲ γυναικῶν—

is often a thing "multi sudoris," as the Latins would say, rather rudely according to our ideas. It is like a fulfilment, however, of St. Benedict's advice to the Goth, "Ecce, labora et noli contristari." It even entails sometimes the humiliations of a common condition, as when a boy, having pulled with a schoolfellow from Petersham to Windsor, proceeding to visit the castle, with rather a saucy air, as self-conscious that our efforts to make ourselves look respectable had failed, resembling in fact two who, instead of possessing the 300,000 purple robes of Lucullus, carried all their clothes about with them, and, as some one says, "found it not very hard work either,"—we heard from the officials as we entered the castle, not indeed the reply of the tanner to Edward IV.,

"I trowe I've more shillings in my purse
Than thou hast pence in thine,"

which would have been bad enough, but the exact words of Aristophanes in his Pythagoreans, which were far worse,—

"Well, to be sure, what figures!
To see you in such a plight!

In such a sweat, and such a heat,
With all that mud upon your feet!
There's not a beggar in the street
Makes such a sorry sight *!"

adding, to complete our intended confusion at seeming poverty-struck, "But some hasn't a single farthing to buy soap, I think." For all its unconscious classicality, that was rather an unkind cut in such precincts. But such is the state of virtue in bad clothes! and I am free to confess that on that day, in regard to our bodies, neither of us were likely to be taken for immortals, or for being of the race of divinely-nourished sceptre-bearing kings either; being pretty much like the fox and the cock in the ark, with only a brush and a comb between them. Certainly, having had often to tow the boat through mud and mire, bemoiled after wading for hours through the dirt, we had not even, like Telemachus, under our "poor feet" the *καλὰ πέδιλα*. Thus it is, after a hard pull, or a hot walk, or a long ride, that, when delighting in young limbs, as Theocritus says, we hope to reap such intervals, thereby identifying ourselves with common people, or, as Mr. Punch complaisantly styles them, "those little chaps," who earn by labour the right to enjoy serene hours without the fear of gout or any thing else to trouble them. The very circumstances of the labour, too, require this kind of disposition; and Pliny, writing as if he was a regular Thames puller and great disdainer of the Serpentine, supplies a curious instance; for, speaking of the current of the Clitumnus, and saying that it renders the descent so pleasant and the return against it so laborious, he adds, "This vicissitude of labour and ease is exceedingly amusing when one proceeds up and down merely for pleasure." I doubt, for all that, if he ever had experience of such sharp work as some reaches of our stream require; for I don't think he would in that case have exactly chosen the word amusing to qualify it. "You'll be able to keep yourselves warm that way," said a workman to our crew as we dashed by him near Kingston on a day in July, when most people were afraid to put their noses out of doors through fear of their being varnished with the rest of their faces

* Athen. iv.

till they looked like a glue-pot; and we returned home somewhat of the colour of red Indians, though with the skin peeling off. It strikes me that the old Roman would have been more likely to fall out with the distance between locks like the magistrate Martin, grandson of the keeper of the seals, Adam Fumée, in the time of Louis XI., of whom De Thou relates a pleasant anecdote. "Being on an official journey in winter, after dining at Pont Sainte-Marie in Gascony, he insisted on proceeding to Agen to sleep, which he was told was a distance of two leagues. His host intimated to him that it was a bad road, but as the great man counted on only two leagues he persisted. However, not only did night overtake him, as was predicted, but he fell into a quagmire, from which his servants had some trouble to pull him out. The magistrates of Agen had to wait for him till midnight, when on arriving he was in such bad humour that he received ill their compliments, and retired to his inn. The next morning, as he was still rather out of temper, on holding his audience, the first thing he commanded was, that for the future, in order not to deceive excursionists, the distance between Sainte-Marie and Agen should be reckoned as six leagues *." With us, however, fatigue enters largely into the pleasure enjoyed on such occasions. One acquires a kind of sense of dignity, too, which is very satisfactory, when one has pulled some thirty miles up the stream; but it is a sense of self-importance which is quite harmless, as in fact it makes you feel on the best terms with all the world. The object also in view on our expeditions is generally common enough, indeed a leetle too common for some; but it can satisfy most of us quite as well as if we had been travelling to see the wall of the ancient Babylon, or the hanging gardens of Babylon, or the Colossus of the sun, and the great labour of the lofty Pyramids, or the vast monument of Mausōlus. It can relieve and refresh one who has visited such places, and, though it were only after seeing the seven wonders of Dauphiné before M. Lancelot had explained them away †, it can dictate even words like those in a famous novel: "I am as one whose eyes have been strained by a violent con-

* Mém. de J. A. de Thou, 1582.

† Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscr. tom. ix.

flict of colours, and your quiet recreation is like the relief of a return to green." The truth is that there is no necessity for making the grand tour, as it used to be called, in order to arrive at the enjoyment of serene hours. "O the silly people!" used a French wise and happy man to exclaim, "who cannot be content with the heights of Bellevue and the terrace of Saint-Germain. You hasten to each of the famous places of Europe, and what do you all the while but substitute disquietude and disappointment for the noblest passions of the human heart, losing yourself, and your friends, and your country,—admiring things you can never see a second time, and accomplishing a sort of penance like that of the Wandering Jew? Look at your professed traveller with his jaded figure, sunless smile, dry farewell ever so ready at his tongue's end, and clothes of every fashion,—a hat bought at Paris, a coat at Berlin, a cloak in London, boots in Estramadura,—people of no nation, whom no one will recognize as of their own." "What a sad result of the human destiny," exclaims a great thinker; "what an irrefragable proof of some primeval misfortune is that want which so many experience to shun the common natural course of life, and to intoxicate the faculties which serve to estimate it! The whole world is agitated by the restlessness of each man; and these innumerable armies which cover the surface of the earth are nothing but the cruel invention of men who are not satisfied with the ordinary pleasures of existence, but who seek something that nature has not offered them, or at least who require needlessly an interruption to the successive duration of habitual ideas, by means of those violent emotions which they find, or rather make, necessary to enable them to endure life."

Then, again, on our sort of expeditions, the arrival is pregnant with matter for considerations of the same kind respecting the happiness attached to what is common, even though on landing and entering we find nothing ready but ourselves, and a larder only fit for what the French style "l'hôtel des trois moineaus." Spenser seems to allude to it, saying,

"Arrived there, the little house they fill."

Just so; for it is not a stately hotel that receives us, in which every thing must be so very nobby, built, as the French say,

between court and garden. It is, as a poet remarks, that which may be even a fulfilment of the prayer of St. Julien, if you set out with it,

> "What ramblers love to tell,
> The quiet of the wayside inn,
> The orchard and the well."

It is a roof under which you can fancy stories being told such as Longfellow has lately charmed us with in his tales of a wayside inn. Perhaps the very sign is humble, as that up the creek at Isleworth, which is "The London Apprentice," or that near Hampton, "The Angler's Rest." If we are to pass the night in one of these houses, you are shown only some dear little white bed, worthy of Drayton's muse when describing the fairy bed, and saying,

> "Of lilies shall the pillows be,
> With down stuft of the butterfly."

Intended to serve here for very common mortals, you are struck with the agreeable contrast which it presents both to the grand affairs that used to be prepared for Ulysses, and to the great funereal damask pavilion, where, as Sir Epicure Mammon says, "down is too hard," placed in the centre of some vast dingy state bedroom, as described by Thackeray, that vanity would conduct you elsewhere to. There is nothing in any part of the simple dwelling, if we except the swallow-nests under the eaves within reach of the window, to require an inscription like that we read in a palace at Padua, "Hic oculi, hinc manus." I wish, as in Izaak Walton's honest ale-house, we could now-a-days find "twenty ballads stuck about the wall." But though in this particular, as Lord Bacon would say, there is a deficiency to be noticed, there is still much to please you; for if you reckon this always, like Launce, that a man is never welcome to a place till some certain shot be paid, and the hostess say "Welcome," come on, I would say with Speed, "I'll to the garden with you presently, where, for one shot of five-pence, thou shalt have five thousand welcomes." To the garden then! where you will have freedom enough; for I promise you it won't be there as at Conflans in the days of Monseigneur Harlay and the Duchesse

de Lesdiguières, when gardeners used to follow them at a little distance in order to efface with rakes the marks of their footsteps as they walked along together*.

I would not have you too intimately acquainted with tapsters; but have you ever lain on the grass in Kemp's little plot after pulling up, on a hot day, from Richmond or Kew with a friend, or dined in that small hostel where indeed some have a delight to sit?—I hope here be truths. Have you ever strolled about Hampton Court and Bushy Park in the same pleasant company, or rested on the green bank of the "Pack Horse" at Staines, where such famous shandygaff can be obtained, in despite of all that Stoics like the pagan Seneca might say to discourage customers, affirming, with his pedantic pomposity, that "bibere et sudare vita cardiaci est†," or have you merely sat on Barnes Common with the geese, and gathered blackberries? Have you ever been to Rosherville, that place "to spend a dappy day in," as placards upon the walls of London now announce to the multitude, and listened to German musicians in the evening there, or have you ever played on Hampstead Heath, or ever stretched yourself on the grass beyond Primrose Hill upon a summer's afternoon? If you have, I am willing to believe that you know better than I can tell you what a serene hour is. In such moments one feels inclined to say with young Launcelot, "Well, if fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear." Why, man, these poor common things,—this garden, this heathy bank, this song or overture, this arch chaffing with good-humoured strangers,—would make "huge leviathans forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands;" as when St. Augustine envied the temporal felicity of the merry poor man, while he was himself engaging in laborious follies; and as when Sir William Temple says, "The only way for a rich man to be healthy is to live as if he were some poor fellow, and obliged, perhaps, even to take for himself often the worst parts of poverty," an opinion which apparently would not have greatly shocked Ptolemy the Second, king of Egypt, when seeing some Egyptians dining by the river side, and eating whatever it might be that they had, and lying at random on the sand, he

* St. Simon, i. 290. † Epist. xv.

cried out, "O wretched man that I am, that I am not one of those men!" "The mean estate is without care," says our old dramatist, "as long as it continueth without pride." This common object, then, so easily, you might suppose, obtained, is that for which others, identifying happiness with the possession of what is extraordinary, make such expensive and unnecessary provision. Yet here, with only the grass, and sunshine, a little good humour, and some trifle of brown money, all is found.

"Nam neque divitibus contingunt gaudia solis."

How many happy kings are seen sitting in the garden enjoying the fine evening, and smoking in great state, as if they thought, like Sganarelle, that "qui vit sans tabac n'est pas digne de vivre!" For the time, too, let me tell you, they are poets,—

"In smoke upwreathing from the pipe's trim bowl,
Their gifted ken can see
Phantoms of sublimity."

Trite as the instance may seem, one cannot find a more striking example, if not content with your own experience, than that of Diocletian, who, after trying the different occupations of ruling men and planting cabbages, thought planting cabbages much the pleasanter of the two. To Maximus writes Pliny, saying, "In compliance with your invitation, I consent to make you a visit at your Formian villa. It is not the pleasure of your coast, it is your company, it is retirement, it is freedom that I desire to enjoy, otherwise I might as well remain in Rome." The most refined and cultivated minds of the ancient world, rising at times above the atmosphere that encompassed them, evinced a decided predilection for the kind of pleasure that a taste for common things confers, as where the poet, writing to one who preferred the circles of the capital, which he terms his nest, says to him, as if inviting him to our river banks,

"Tu nidum servas: ego laudo ruris amœni
Rivos, et musco circumlita saxa, nemusque.
Quid quæris? vivo et regno, simul ista reliqui
Quæ vos ad cœlum effertis rumore secundo."

At all events, to further the general end kept in view in such

expeditions as ours, it is very certain, however unconscious we may be of it, that we ought to have some of the tastes and even habits of undistinguished people, such as on our last ramble we heard De Quincey express sympathy with. We must sometimes at least appear to commence our enterprises in search of this "perfect enjoyment," such as Brown, Jones, and Robinson are so humorously represented tasting, by proceeding somewhat after the fashion of Prasildo in old romance, who had to enter the garden of Medusa by the gate of Poverty, through which accordingly he found himself passing with the greatest ease and delight. If it is not a very objectionable and dangerous thing to say it, and calculated to disorganize society and so forth, one might affirm that possibly it can turn out a great element of serenity in after life to have learned once or twice in a way, how to live like common people, aye, even how to get on without fire in the winter or a bed in summer,—to learn how a shawl can serve for blanket when it is cold, and how a candle in an opposite garret-window can serve us when we happen not to have one of our own for burning. It is a thing that may be learned, how to be merry, how to dine, and how to sleep under difficulties. Many grave men, as a great author says, do not know how much good-humoured and generous people, accustomed to rough it while keeping up a respectable appearance with rather slender means, can extract out of a penny or two. Such habits become not only, as he says, talents, but means of freedom and enjoyment. Past all doubt there is a certain secret sweetness attached to the use of cheap ordinary articles, as tradesmen term them. Indeed for that matter, whether at home or abroad, the mere fact of seeing any little common thing in the way of a room or of a piece of furniture, "such as other mortals use," though it were only a sort of truck-bed or a half-crown looking-glass, appropriated to ourselves, so that we can imagine its being called by others in the house after ourselves, as being ours and no one else's,—I say this bare fact, whimsical as you may think one for saying so, is enough at times to make some people feel quite young and happy again, as in the best and sweetest years of their lives. Balzac speaks of that enchanted castle where the poet Bernia and the common fellow Master Peter were such good company together. In our en-

chanted garden, with its alternate obligation to rest and labour, unlike that one he alludes to, the Calendar is duly received. Work-days and festivals are nowhere better known; the beginning and end of the week are well distinguished; though our enclosures resemble it in what he also notices, that no one came in to bear news, whether good or bad. Here, as Balzac wishes, are expressly under the ban all that savours of the leading article or the speech last night in parliament, and, above all, whatever is fetched from unknown regions extraordinary and rare. Many other persons and things are banished from it, through considerations favourable to our repose, without being to the disparagement of their excellence, while with all sorts of civility, and even unfeigned respect, we shut the wicket against them. Here, however refined may be our breeding, we can lie stretched under a bush like a beggar. Here, as we before had occasion to remark, a taste for common things involves even a relish for what the great poet eulogizes, "the freedom of a frugal feast;" for we can have on our expeditions only such food οἷα βροτοὶ ἄνδρες ἔδουσιν, such as other mortals eat. We all, unless quite done up, come hungry to such rest, and "jejunus raro stomachus vulgaria temnit," though it were only beef and cabbage, or else beef without cabbage, and cabbage without beef by way of a change. In regard to the pleasure of these simple and manly habits, one may still say with Balzac, "the Spaniard with a turnip or a nosegay of fennel can command those who fare sumptuously every day."

Then again, we ought to be capable of receiving agreeable impressions from an observation of the commonest things we meet with. "On our way on my return to Madrid," says Saint-Simon, "from visiting Aranjuez, the king and queen asked me how I liked it. I praised it as it deserved; but I expressed my surprise at their having suffered to remain the old mill on the river, which shocked me, being so near the palace, interrupting the view on the Tagus, and causing a sound which no private person would allow near his residence. This frankness displeased the king, who answered drily that the mill had always been there, and that it did him no harm*. I said no

* Tom. xix. 222.

more about it," he adds; and I would suggest that it was a pity he said so much, as there are five hundred chances to one that Philip the Fifth did well, even in the interests of art and beauty, to preserve the said obstruction; but it was of course too common a thing to suit the taste of the French courtier; and there are plenty of people still, without being courtiers, who would be of his opinion. Nevertheless, for many reasons, those persons, I think, are to be preferred who can appreciate the poor old mill, or any thing analogous, however common. St. Vincent de Paul must have had, I can't help thinking, a keen eye for detecting all the good that may be drawn from common things when he prescribed to his daughters, though it was certainly professed to be directly with a view to charity, that they should have "for cloisters the streets of the town or city." I am not, however, going to enter on that question, but only to call your attention to the fact that it may turn out a great element of serenity to be able to make use of common occasions, and of common circumstances, in the way of cultivating interior enjoyment.

Then again, "non est elegantiæ tuæ," as one of the ancients said to his friend, "tantum magna sectari." See what a small matter suffices to supply a poet with a subject for his song. "Erinna was of few words and stories, but these little things obtained for her the Muses." There is an old poem on a city shower which pleases even after reading Virgil's land-shower:

> "Now in contiguous drops the flood comes down,
> Threat'ning with deluge the devoted town.
> To shops in crowds the daggled females fly,
> Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy.
> The tuck'd up sempstress walks with hasty strides,
> While streams run down her oil'd umbrella's sides.
> Here various kinds by various fortunes led,
> Commence acquaintance underneath a shed."

Tacitus accused his age of being heedless of its own, "incuriosa suorum." In one respect all times are alike obnoxious to the charge, for men are subject to make little of what belongs to themselves of undisputed right in the form of common things. And perhaps even like the facetious knight, some will proceed

even to condemn, at least inwardly, their own country itself as too common a thing, or to accuse it in his words, saying, "But it was always yet the trick of our English nation, if they have a good thing, to make it too common." But such thoughts even the philosopher notices for blame. "One ought not," says Cicero, "to be deprived of feeling, and unknowing in things of every-day life and in the vulgar customs of men." There are a thousand things, even in popular language, which have a certain grace and sweetness; so that even this great master of style is obliged to say on one occasion, after pointing out an instance which might be matched and multiplied in our own common English, "if the unlearned custom is such an artificer of sweetness, what ought we not to demand from art and learning?" Half-educated people, and others too who sometimes affect sublimity by using fine words, overlook all this; they reiterate the complaints found in Ben Jonson, and say for their part that they would not so penuriously glean wit from every laundress or hackney-man, or derive their best grace, with servile imitation, from common stages, or observation of the obscure company they converse with. For any thing to go down with them, it must be perfumed and disguised. What more common than beauty? yet, as some one wittily remarks, "we cannot even praise that without pretending it to be something different from what it really is, and making it out, in fact, to be so rare as to be undesirable." So Angelina in the Sisters says,

> "If I were really what you would commend,
> Mankind would fly me. Get a painter, sir,
> And when he has wrought a woman by your fancy,
> See if you know her again. Were it not fine
> If you should see your mistress without hair,
> Dress'd only with these glittering beams you talk of,
> Two suns instead of eyes, and they not melt
> The forehead made of snow? No cheeks, but two
> Roses inoculated on a lily? ———
> Between, a pendent alabaster nose?
> Her lips cut out of coral, and no teeth
> But strings of pearl? ———
> Would not this strange chimera fright yourself?
> And yet you take the boldness to present us,

> And think we must applaud, and thank you for
> Ourselves, made monsters by your art. No more
> Of this, for shame."

The lovers of the extraordinary in nature expose themselves to equal ridicule. "In many works of modern literature," says Sainte-Beuve, alluding to Lamartine, "there is a sad abuse of uncommon harmonies, and murmurs, and verdures, and waters. An eminent critic, M. Joubert, speaking of similar defects, though less developed, in the style of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, says that when one has read him for some time it is delightful to see the real trees and fields less coloured than in his writings. His harmonies make us love the dissonances which he banished from the world, though found at each step in it. Nature has its music, but fortunately it is scarce. If reality offered the melodies which these gentlemen find every where, we should be reduced to live in an ecstatic languor, or expire in a lethargy *." The purist, or what the French called "la précieuse," could do nothing according to common usage. All was to be approached, for I will not say enjoyed, out of its season, as when Sheridan said,

> "Scarce rural Kensington due honour gains;
> The vulgar verdure of her walks remains."

"The person of this type," as Cousin remarks, "could neither walk, nor speak, nor even dine like another †." The correct thing was to appear not to eat any thing substantial, only marmalade, or ice, or confectionery of the most attenuated kind, in the smallest quantity. In short, one was to seem above all material and bodily wants. The least thing said or done as one of the commonalty would say or do it, would have spoiled all.

But with regard to the whole aggregate and detail of life and customs of an indifferent nature, to have a capacity for esteeming what is most common will greatly conduce to the particular end we have in view in these rambles; for indeed, as Ferdinand says in the Tempest, "most poor matters point to rich ends." What serene hour can he have who in this way desires to be singular and remarkable; who for that purpose becomes a con-

* Causeries du Lundi, i.

† M. de Sablé, 69.

noisseur, the adept of some out-of-the-way passion, and who in consequence merits the sarcastic counsel of Rolliardo, when he says to Bonamico, "I'll tell you a better project, wherein no courtier has prefool'd you? Stick your skin with feathers, and draw the rabble of the city to see a monstrous bird brought from Peru." The fact is that common things, common sounds, common objects of sight, admit of being repeated day after day, as long as we live, without causing weariness; whereas any thing remarkable or out-of-the-way, to suit your amateurs, and connoisseurs, and lovers of the extraordinary, after being seen or heard three or four times, excites loathing and nausea. What commoner than the sound of a little bell at church? That irritates no one's nerves, raises no other idea but that which is agreeable in all works of art or nature, namely, of successful simplicity in the adaptation of means to an end; but substitute for it a Chinese gong, or a set of Gothic bells, arranged according to harmony, such as Randolph's Doriglus would call "a mellisonant tingle-tangle," and in a short time every one of ordinary feeling will desire to stop his ears against it, more than if he feared the Tititatee of the fairies come expressly to torment him.

There is good sense in the advice of the old poet, rejecting of course his direct heathen object, for we must always be on our guard against some gentry's inferences,

"——— Age libertate Decembri
(Quando ita majores voluerunt) utere."

It is even a precept of the true wisdom to observe many things which a scrupulous mind would shrink from with uneasiness. Richard of St. Victor cites the words "Dedi cor meum ut scirem prudentiam atque doctrinam erroresque et stultitiam," and then he says, "You see how he observes not only good, but bad manners and errors; not alone prudence, but also folly. It is of true devotion to investigate all things, and judge of all things*."

To know nothing of our popular usages, and to be ignorant of our lighter literature, provided for the commonalty, as Ci

* De Eruditione Hom. interioris, lib. ii. c. 7.

would say, "aut inertissimæ segnitiæ est, aut fastidii delicatissimi." Who can wonder if to such out-of-the-way caprices people in general should oppose their own caprices, or that there should be a very legitimate retaliation by their spirit savouring more of every-day use, when to the insipid abstractions of over-grave men, that put every thing into their murky crucible, they prefer simple bright realities even though they be somewhat strong? "Give yourself freedom," adds a great French critic whose words I have been citing; "don't be afraid to feel like others; never dread being too common." And, after all, you have only to translate into Greek many of the simple passages that offend you in our poor English songs and other popular pieces, and you can reckon on having them approved of by men of authority and of the most solemn manners, "castissimæ vitæ, morumque integerrimorum." The Stoics would not allow a man to raise his finger without leave from philosophy, which prohibition our sticklers for distinction would extend to all that had not leave from the etiquette of frigid stately circles. But, in truth, such notions seem very extravagant; and happily for many, they are also uncommon. He will be wiser, and manlier, and more serene who can congratulate himself with an old author "on having never fallen into any of these fantastical tastes, nor esteemed any thing the more for its being uncommon and hard to be met with." "If," says Mercier, "a judicious person were to give a general picture of what existed around him, and to paint the manners of his own age, such a picture would be useful to posterity. But man too often disdains what is placed before his eyes, tries to divine useless things, and obsolete usages which will lead to no important result*." Yet, not to dwell upon the fact that great events are often produced by the smallest, commonest things in the world, that the hidden springs of the visible machine are often even weak and of very ordinary material,—it is these little daily customary things that can yield the most innocent and agreeable matter for observation, conversation, and even thought; for we can apply to every order of facts the remark of the ancient naturalist, and say, that the Author of all beings is never greater than in the least

* Mercier, Tableau de Paris.

things—"nusquam magis quam in minimis," which led a later philosopher to say, "Maximus in minimis certe Deus." "Happy is the man," says the Prince de Ligne, "who by the value that he sets on little ordinary things, and the delight which he takes in them, prolongs his youth!" How charming, to name but one instance, is the sound of the common human voice! What harmony in the tone! The tongue of the young, even in mock contention, sounds musical. No fantasy of Beethoven, no cantabile of Mozart, no recitative of Gluck has more charm for the ear than the sound of such a voice. As we suggested, too, when we spoke of the debt we all owe to women, there are key-notes, to use the expression of a great author, simply uttered, which can haunt the heart and effect more wonders than ever yet have been wrought by the most artful chorus or the deftest quill. But generally, and every where, I would say with Cowley,

> "The things which these proud men despise and call
> Impertinent, and vain, and small,
> Those smallest things of nature let me know,
> Rather than all their greatest actions do."

Hostile, again, and often wholly fatal to the enjoyment of serene hours, is the affectation of singularity, from whatever motive it originates, when opposed to what is common in manners; hostile is the sophistic spirit at variance with common sense in matters of opinion; and hostile are extravagant views of morals in contravention of the ordinary and universal sentiments of right and wrong. Let us follow this order in pursuing the subject for our present excursion.

Singularity, in the first place, is an antagonistic element, both in the person who affects it, and with regard to those who are for the time, associated with him. "The getting into uncommon habits, without necessity, while it is a want," as an old writer says, "of that humble deference which is due to others, and (what is worst of all) the certain indication of some secret flaw in the mind of the person that contracts them," is surely cause disquietude, as it entails, besides the possible contingency of being stared at in the street, the need of trying to justify oneself or to depreciate others. How pleasant it is to have companions, individuals or families that might stand as a

sonification or type of the city that we inhabit with affection, or of the country that we love and honour! How pleasant to have nothing to do with people that are fond of obtruding upon all the world what philosophers call their idiosyncrasies! "I have heard it said long ago," writes Balzac, "that if extraordinary acts are not great acts, they pass for ridiculous." As Louis Ratisbonne remarks, "The Revolution and its monstrous examples of madness and death can show, on a colossal scale, the consequences of having a too violent love for out-of-the-way ideas." Alas! how much has the world to dread from the reckless propagation of "ideas!" That first great movement in this direction, at all events, did not allow any one, excepting in a high mystic form those who were its victims, to have serene hours. This writer notices in particular its effects upon the female character. "It is a poor ambition for a woman," he says, "to want to be a man. Yes; make women citizens, give them votes and eligibility, the rights of politicians, the right of suffrage, and all the other rights of which we make so capital a use, and you will have only taken from them, I fear, a priceless good, a right which they have at heart, I fancy, as much as all the rest,—the right to love. A fine thing, assuredly, if one can find it—a woman enamoured only with the happiness of humanity, having for lover the rights of man—but an author will labour in vain. We shall prefer always a woman pitying the misfortunes of a man, though he were a king, to the philanthropist who has a general compassion for humanity, and holding on her lap open the 'contrat social,' a mother kissing her children to a mother disquieted about the future political condition that awaits the world*." Such effects, besides their un-English character, are so ridiculous that we cannot think while witnessing them of their other aspect; but there are also some results which, by no means risible, are in more direct hostility to peaceful enjoyment. There are men, for instance, as Balzac says, and unfortunately some of them contrive now to write for the English public every week and every day, and that too with the reputation of being oracular, "who will yield neither to evident reason, nor to established custom, nor to received usage. They oppose

* Louis Ratisbonne, Impressions littéraires.

the singularity of their opinion as being perhaps even sometimes that of rationalistic Catholics, though of course in general belonging to a more openly hostile camp; and strive to maintain it against the consent of mankind and a crowd of examples. The briefs and bulls of popes, the edicts and declarations of kings, the principles of common law, and of justice between nations are for others and not for them. They would abrogate all public acts that did not agree with their private sense." That is rather too much of a good thing for us, or if the subject were less grave I would say that is too pretty. Let us just for a moment consider the difficulty of such men's position, and the endless wants and disquietudes consequent upon it. Some of these, to be sure, are often seen in conjunction with tastes that are only absurd. Here, for example, is an amateur of books described by M. de Sacy. "What, not a Racine in your library!" some one exclaims, "you have not a Racine! Alas! no. For the last thirty years I have been seeking one. I believe I shall die before I succeed. But all booksellers' shops are full of them! Ah, yes, for you; but as for me, I only want one edition, and that cannot be found any where." But it is Balzac, in his description of the Barbon, who silently pointing at the danger that on some future trip we shall understand more fully, paints them best. At present we shall only see the laughable side. "In every thing," he says, "the design of the Barbon is to make himself remarked for his singularity. Of two opinions he embraces not the best or most usual, but that which is least common and most generally abandoned. Wherever he is going he never wishes to take the common great road. He wished to be singular even in his appearance. So he used to say, that with beards, as with the orations of Demosthenes, the longest is the best. He loved the Œnobarbi of Rome, the Barbari of Venice, and the Barbarini of Florence. The Barbon, in spite of the curate and godfathers, changed the names of his daughters Martha and Geneviève into Corinna and Sappho. The two first were not sufficiently rare or ancient for the posterity of an extraordinary man." One day the Barbon made an effort to speak like other people, and to humour the ignorant. He wished to condescend to our common intelligence, and, as he said, "lisp with children." Well, it was not exactly as one of us would

talk, I promise you. Balzac gives a specimen of some prodigious nonsense couched in scientific terms, and then adds, "This is what he called letting himself down from heaven to earth, accommodating himself to poor mortals—speaking in a popular manner—though there was hardly a common word, even when he wanted it, that could escape his lips. Even some of the Latin classics seemed to him as too popular and low—only fit for chambermaids, and for the meanest mob of Rome. 'What is the use,' he used to ask, 'of this low and popular familiarity which engenders contempt, which expresses first thoughts, and which makes no difference between me and the ignorant vulgar?'" There are Barbons still living, and even in England; but what could we make of one of them if by any strange fatality he should be with us going out for the day? The ancients, in fact, actually showed the incompatibility of such ways with the object of a pleasure party, saying with Antiphanes,

> "Call it as others do. Forbear
> Those sad long-winded sentences, those long
> And round-about periphrases; it seems
> To me by far too great a labour thus
> To dwell on matters which are small themselves,
> And only great in such immense descriptions*."

Though it seems incredible, the truth is, that others of this character don't even wish to be understood. They are always on tenter-hooks lest their singularity should be invaded by others of their own class. They even despise the very thing they had been always extolling as soon as they see it realized by others, as when Chateaubriand having said to Béranger, "Well, you have got your republic," the philosophic sonneteer replied, "Yes, I have; but I would rather dream of it than see it." It is the same with many others. In proportion, for instance, as the doctrines of Henry Heine became influential, he confesses himself that he grew disgusted with them. "One man alone has understood me," he said on his death-bed, adding, "yet, after all, not even he understood me."

* Athen. x.

Proudhon, too, at one period of his life, another example, had been maintaining some of his grand propositions in the style of Hégel. One member of the assembly, after listening to him with great admiration, came up, shook him warmly by the hand, and with a grand air promised him his vote. "Don't vote," replied the philosopher, half angry, "you can't have understood me*." Cicero laughed at such airs. "Are men," he asks, "to speak one way and philosophers another? Are the learned and the unlearned to be opposed in respect to all language? But when the learned speak with others on any point—'si homines essent, usitate loquerentur'—as it is, the things are the same, but they invent words of their own to express them†." What is curious enough to observe, persons of this kind have no peace, even when constrained by nature to speak like common mortals; aye, and to talk pretty considerable nonsense too. What would give others ease is to them a source of bitterness and humiliation. "I had been considering for many a long winter's night," says Henry Heine, "what lofty sublime thing I could say to Goethe when I first met him. Well, the moment came at Weimar, and I could find nothing to say but that the plums between Jena and Weimar were good." Poor man! what a distressing eventuality. Yet there are times when even the remarkable individual himself, for being treated as such, suffers as much as any of his admirers. "I see persons in a strange embarrassment," says Mademoiselle de Scudéry, "because they have taken it into their heads that they ought not to speak to me as to other people. It's in vain that I talk to them about the weather or the news of the day, or of topics that form ordinary conversation; they always stick to the point; and they are so persuaded that I do violence to myself in speaking that way to them, that they do themselves violence to talk to me in such a style; and I am heartily sick of having to play Sappho's part." The Duc de Saint-Simon remarks that Madame Dacier would never consent to figure in this way. With all her vast learning she never showed it off, and in company you would have taken her for quite an ordinary woman, who, however witty, liked to

* Louis Ratisbonne, Impressions lit.

† De Finibus, v.

talk about bonnets and fashions with other women, and to rattle away upon other such matters as form common conversation, and that, too, with such naturalness and simplicity as if really she knew nothing better *. Even Montesquieu, in his Pensées, complained of those who were always for drawing him out, saying, "I love the sort of houses where I can get on with my every-day mind: 'où je puis me tirer d'affaire avec mon esprit de tous les jours.'"

You think, perhaps, that every-day mind and talk must be somehow low or wrong, and opposed to the aspirations of an enlightened person; but, happily for us all, the interests of intelligence and peaceful enjoyment, in this respect at least, are conjoined. "We say few solid things," says Vauvenargues, "when we seek to say things extraordinary. Genius may give them currency at the moment when they are uttered, but the next day no one tries to pass them." And Pascal goes even farther, saying, "It is not in things extraordinary and odd that excellence in regard to any subject can be found. Nature, which alone is good, is all familiar and all common †." "To me," says Cicero, "those seem true opinions which can be delivered before the people as well as before the senate—'quæ in senatu, quæ apud populum proferendæ sint.' Some plebeian proverbs, in fact," he adds, "are truer than some dogmas of the philosophers, as when the common people say 'jucundi acti labores ‡.'" While, as for oratory, all that we say ought to be accommodated to the ears of the multitude, to delight and excite them, and to prove those things which are not to be examined by the finely graduated scales of a goldsmith, but by a certain common rude popular balance §. He even insists on avoiding whatever is unusual, abhorrent from the ears of the vulgar, and which cannot be used by them ||. He seems to think that what we have best we owe to what we hear daily said at home, and to what our fathers and mothers used to say. He would affirm with Polynices, "These things have I declared, not with intricacies of argument, but both to the wise and to the illiterate just

* Mém. xix. 402. † Pensées.
‡ De Fin. ii. § De Oratore, ii. || iii.

as appears to me." He would have said with Ben Jonson, "Pure and neat language I love, yet plain and customary."

After all, whatever may be pronounced by learned academies respecting the advantage of expressing things with such ingenious subtlety as to surpass the understanding of the vulgar*, experience proves that the ease and comfort of speaking like common people can be reconciled with every interest, not excepting those even of taste and the most polished literature, as well as those of highest truth. "There was a danger for this poet," says Louis Ratisbonne, speaking of an eminent sonneteer; "it was that speaking for the common people he might lose in elegance and purity what he gained in simplicity and naturalness. He steered clear of this rock. He has spoken for them according to their own heart; but it was in a pure diction, correct as an ode of Horace; and so he united the popular inspiration with the choice expression, the impulsive abruptness of sentiment with the delicate art of language†." To what lengths will not some men even unconsciously proceed, through a secret love of singularity! This passion can directly militate against the very wish to enjoy serene hours. If you doubt it, hear the confession of René, which might be made by multitudes in the society around us. "My grief itself," he says, "by its extraordinary nature carried a certain remedy with it. 'On jouit de ce qui n'est pas commun, même quand cette chose est un malheur.'"

But we said that another consequence of forsaking what is common, which is hostile to the enjoyment of serene hours, is the sophistic spirit, and at this character accordingly we must throw a rapid glance in passing.

"What a pity," said a woman one day of Sieyès, "that a man so amiable should want to be profound!" This was speaking in advance for all our party on the Thames, where aping the profound is what none of us exactly like, I can tell you. We'd run from it, and hide us in the brakes; for the wildest has not such a heart as it denotes. Contempt for what is common is the predominant feature of the person under the influence of this silly ambition—

* M. de la Nauze, Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscr. xx.

† Louis Ratisbonne, Impressions littéraires.

"Il penserait paraître un homme du commun,
Si l'on voyait qu'il fût de l'avis de quelqu'un."

This leads him on a slippery road, and a most dangerous one; for not to speak at present of graver consequences, that we shall have to consider on a future day, he may come to be in the condition of Tasso, of whom the Duke of Ferrara used to say, as the poet himself complains, that "he did not believe a word he said;" "and the fact is," observes a commentator, "that this poet beheld the same things in so many different lights, and according as it suited him at the moment, that without intending falsehood his statements are really not to be relied on." At all events, this disposition leads such a person on the road of paradoxes, which is not the way to achieve at least our particular object, or, for that matter, to set reason at rest either. "For nothing," says M. de Sacy, "is more frivolous than paradoxes, sophisms, and the extraordinary. Solidity"—and, he might have added, calm enjoyment—"is only in good sense, that which was found among other lost things in the moon." Whatever under a grave form outrages common sense, is, necessarily, a nuisance, and a cause of disquietude. Now the system-monger does that. "It is the exclusive characteristic of systems of philosophy," says an eminent French author, "that makes common sense revolt against them. At the bottom, philosophy is only the development of popular notions. Common sense knows every thing, but it cannot give an account of what it knows. Its science is rather instinctive than rational, practical rather than theoretic. Common sense owes gratitude to philosophy, for in fine consenting to recognize its rights, though, in truth, whether philosophy acknowledges or denies them, is a matter very indifferent to common sense, which no less continues to govern the world. Common sense takes the world as it finds it, and lets it go as it chooses. Philosophy wants to explain it. I do not blame it for the desire, but it may turn out that what it seeks is above humanity." Would you observe how a large revenue of common sense conduces to serenity? You have only to remark how it never systematically quarrels with any set of opinions, knowing that there is some particle of what is right in all, while it cordially submits to

truth wherever it is found. Take, for instance, its conduct with regard to the scholastic philosophy, as remarked by De Sacy. "Well, good sense accepts what is true in each system. With nominalism it dissipates all imaginary beings, and maintains at the same time the eternal distinction of individuals and substances. With realism good sense admits that genera, species, and classes answer to something real, that is, to the plan of God, to the object of creation, and to the ideas of the supreme architect." Let your companions be ever so grave, and the discussions ever so philosophical, under the guidance of common sense you are able to retain your own serenity, and even to protect that of others from being interrupted by provocation in the domain of thought; for your grave and clever people can announce propositions that will fret and provoke the most frolicsome, just as the same scientific people can arrest the flight of a butterfly and impale it on their abominable card. Many of the great questions of the present day can only be solved by an appeal from strict logicians to common sense. How far are "religious opinions" to be tolerated by the state? When is coercion necessary? Try to settle these points by your reason alone, for what may not be offered as a religious opinion? and we shall soon see you engulphed in quagmires that are bottomless. Our advice should therefore be that of Carol to Fairfield—

> "Your words of hard concoction, your rude sophistry
> Have much impair'd my health. Try sense another while,
> And calculate some prose according to
> The elevation of our pole at London,
> As says the learned almanack."

The Père Boutauld cautions people against imagining that an individual folly, often the proper name for the private opinion of a remarkable man, can ever be worth more than a wisdom that is common to all the world. Even the severe and terrible Pascal feels obliged on one occasion to appeal to the common interpretation put upon words "by all women, forming," as he condescends to notice, "one-half of the human race, by artisans and the people generally, in fine, by ordinary men of all kinds." And in another of his famous letters he seems to consider it an argument in favour of a certain theological discussion that it

proved "agreeable even to people of the world, and intelligible also to women." The truth is, and, as Balzac adds, "be it said without offence to the university, there is a natural logic and there are ignorant sages. In every country there are doctors in the vulgar tongue, and among common people examples to prove that reason alone can do great things, without aid from art or science."

> "Now is not that of God a full fair grace,
> That such a lewed man's wit shall pace
> The wisdom of an heap of lernede men?"

This natural logic is the great guardian of intellectual peace for those who seek to enjoy it in serene hours. Doubt, for instance, on points that involve religion with all its train of mystical and yet most certain influences on the heart, can be an amusement; and what a recreation for a few ambitious and bewildered thinkers, who have let go their hold of what we all need to keep us steady! but, as De Sacy says, "for the multitude it is torture." Therefore Voltaire would consign to ignominy all persons devoted to serene hours with the common people, expressing himself in these revolting and proud words, too odious to be translated into our English tongue: "La philosophie ne sera jamais faite pour le peuple. La canaille d'aujourd'hui ressemble en tout à la canaille d'il y a quatre mille ans. Nous n'avons jamais voulu éclairer les cordonniers et les servantes. C'est le partage des apôtres." It is such confessions as this of the sophist of Fernay that explain the sympathy which binds differently constituted but healthy minds to the multitude, to the simple, ignorant class of mortals, whose serenity is troubled by no unbelief with regard to such matters, because it is undisturbed by thirst for personal distinction. And after all, "by the benignity of Providence," as a philosopher says, "the truths of most importance in themselves, and which it most concerns us to know, are, or might be, familiar to us as Christians, even from childhood." How truthful sounds the old Greek chorus, repeating words elsewhere emblazoned as it were on a popular banner, "It is wise to keep away that mind and intellect which proceed from over-curious men; what the baser multitude thinks

and adopts, that will I utter!" In general each of us on these occasions will be inclined to say with Molière,

> "Les doctes entretiens ne sont point mon affaire,
> J'aime à vivre aisément; et, dans tout ce qu'on dit,
> Il faut se trop peiner pour avoir de l'esprit;
> Et j'aime mieux n'avoir que de communs propos,
> Que de me tourmenter pour dire de beaux mots."

Who that reflects on the abuse and perversion of over-refinement has not felt the pleasure of listening even to the verbal faults of the lower orders? How good-humouredly Cervantes paints the blunders of some rude fellows promising very gravely to assist their companions after their death, "per manière de naufrage!" meaning "per modum suffragii," a grand expression, which they thus tried to repeat without understanding its etymology, though the thing meant by it they knew well enough. For my part I must plead guilty to a sort of fellow-feeling even for that unknown public so humorously described in Household Words—the "public of the penny journals; a public of three millions, who write to consult the editors, and ask how to correct their habit of blushing on being introduced to any one; how to write neatly; who desire to know how to pronounce 'picturesque,' and what 'chiar oscuro' means; what are ancient and what modern histories; at what hour of the day they should visit a newly married couple; who want to know the name of David's mother, and how to untan their faces—the unknown public, in a literary sense, hardly beginning as yet to learn to read; from no fault of their own, still ignorant of every thing which is generally known and understood among readers in the rank above them; a reading public of three millions which lies right out of the pale of literary civilization; the enormous outlawed majority; the lost literary tribes; the prodigious unknown three millions, for whom the penny journals are provided."

Our excursionist then, in a word, must not have a sophistic turn of mind; however learned or accustomed to philosophic disputations, he must be capable of enjoying the peace of good sense, and the untroubled serenity of the popular and even plebeian wisdom, though accompanied with its usual drawbacks in

the way of ignorance on many subjects. He may have no exquisite reason for what he says or does, but he has reason good enough. He must be one of those who have free licence to speak no wiser than persons of base titles, and to be nothing better, at least in their own estimation, than common men or women. He must resemble that excellent man, one of the learned, of whom Balzac speaks in these terms, saying, "He has no visions, no particular lights; his speculations all agree with common sense. He follows Aristotle without being his slave, and leaves him without being his enemy. He is not factious in theology, and does not wish to make himself remarked by the singularity of his opinions. He respects the fathers; but he confesses also that he owes much to the order and method of the scholastics. His equity and moderation preserve him amidst all the bitterness and animosity of parties. He keeps at equal distance from both extremities. His mind is not infected with the dregs of earth, but neither does it feed on air."

Such is the fellow of common mind that gives himself no airs and has no pretensions. While in general no men are so selfish as authors, and those who plume themselves on some mental superiority or individual attainments, to promote which many of them would abandon their dearest friend at his greatest shift, this unregarded, untrumpeted comrade of ours, as one of the οἱ πολλοί, never thinks about himself, excepting that he knows he must do his duty, whatever it be. Conscious that there is nothing of what is commonly called extraordinary in himself, he has no secret ways of furthering views of his own. He is ready for any thing you wish at any hour. All he seems to care for is to serve and please others. Of course you must give him time beforehand to discharge his obligations. You are out in your reckoning, if you think that he will forget them; but those once accomplished, you may take him where you like. He is yours in all serenity, and not his own in secret, for the day or for as much longer as you may both have leave for. I draw this portrait from life at Kensington. It is that of one who wears, to be sure, rather a different habit from ours. We must not name him, of course; but he loves the Thames, and, when he can spare time in a sly way, is on it.

In fine, though heaven knows it is rather saucy and overbold

in us to trespass upon such ground, it remains to consider the necessity of avoiding these extravagant views about conduct which are opposed to the common universal sentiments of right and wrong,—views that constitute, as we said, another element hostile or fatal to the pleasures of a serene hour.

There are persons brought up within hearing of such constant misrepresentations, defamations, and disparagement of mankind, that they contract, by degrees, an actual dislike and a fear to go forth among their fellow-creatures at any hour even of the day. "These costermonger times," they exclaim, "all the gifts appertinent to man, as the malice of this age shapes them, are not worth a gooseberry." They want to have lived in the heroic ages, which, perhaps, after all, only mean fabulous ages. Those children of men whom God delights to be with, are too coarse and common for them; and yet the first condition to constitute a hero or a saint is nothing else, we are told, but what is very easily and generally found, even in the times we live in. It is, as Madame Swetchine used to say, "that he be first and superlatively an honest fellow*." It is that he should follow the road of vulgar probity—the true probity—that he should follow the old high road, the royal road of common noble manly qualities, of common noble manly habits, of common noble manly instincts. Otherwise, whatever consequences follow, the enjoyment of a serene hour will not follow. It is not merely light profane people like ourselves, mind you, that say all this. Lacordaire, "in one of the last grand moments of his victorious eloquence," as says his noble friend Montalembert, gave utterance to the same thought. "Ah," he exclaimed, "I am a Christian, and yet my heart warms at that name of 'honnête homme,' 'good fellow,' as we might perhaps translate it. At that sound I see before me the image of one whose heart has never meditated injustice, and whose hand has never wrought it,—one who keeps his word, who is constant in his friendships, sincere and firm in his convictions; under the trial of time, which changes and which seeks to involve every thing in its changes, one who is equally far from obstinacy in error and from that insolence peculiar to the apostasy which arises either from the baseness

* Pensées.

of treason or from the shameful mobility of an inconstant mind. Such a one, of course, is not yet exactly the hero,—but it is already something noble and perhaps, alas! not quite a common thing, at least in its plenitude. Let us salute it with respect in passing; and whatever you be yourself,—Christian, saint even,—rejoice if you hear whispered in reference to yourself, and, above all, in the depths of your conscience, that admirable praise, you are 'un honnête homme'—a good fellow *."

Sophistic notions of conduct therefore must be thrown overboard, and your old-fashioned notions of honour and goodness believed in and welcomed. The latter, in fact, for all their humanity, or rather, perhaps, we should say by reason of it, are actually considered divine qualities. Is there not a sacred voice proclaiming, that he who doeth justice is just, even as He also is just? "Ne desinas vero unquam," says Pius IX. to the Archbishop of Varsovie, "fideles populos semper monere, ut a veritatis, honoris, virtutis, justitiæque semita nunquam deflectant †." But then, some will exclaim, these are such small matters, and so commonplace. "Ah, well, for that matter," as a French author remarks, "the older you grow, the more you will observe that often the greatest services rendered to humanity are conferred by the smallest means. The first who put up a bed for the sick poor, the first who opened an asylum for infants, performed a greater and more useful act than the unknown kings who raised the pyramids of Egypt ‡." At all events, let you be where you may, it won't do to soften down the great primitive lines of distinction through attachment to any other. Rascally actions, to use a common expression, or σχέτλια ἔργα, as Homer says, the Almighty loves not; but He honours what we call just and fair,

——— δίκην καὶ αἴσιμα ἔργ' ἀνθρώπων.

There are many occasions in which the reflection is forced upon us that the common every-day duties of life are articles of peace for every one, as well as principles of goodness; and that the extravagance of persons seeking to supersede them by singular

* Troisième Conférence de Toulouse. † Bref, June 6th, 1861.
‡ La semaine des trois jeudis.

things that they think superior, besides being detrimental to the very cause they profess to serve, can disturb the harmony of the sweetest hour. "I will say this one thing," writes St. Francis de Sales, "but remember it well,—we amuse ourselves at times so much in trying to be good angels that we cease to be good men and good women*." "The Church," as Balzac says, "is too good to oblige us to read all that doctors will write;" but only think of persons who are not doctors pretending that it is paganism, and naturalism, and perhaps heresy to love what is common! who are always putting you in mind that you must in the name of religion revile your country, stigmatize all its customs, neglect all your acquaintances if they be not ripe for canonization, aye, even without reference to that matter, hate your father and your mother, and never condescend to love a creature as any one else loves, or care for mere natural things! who seem inclined to reply with the Gallican theologian, if you urge the example of our Lord having gone to the marriage-feast, that "it was not the best thing He had done!" and who even appear to encounter some difficulty in making up their minds to admire the divine intervention when Abraham was about to slay his son! What charming hours await you if such thoughts, from whatever true source originating, before getting so discoloured, are in your own mind, or if they sway the judgment of your companion! Even without fanaticism, when years are added, the evil seems only to increase. There are minds naturally more susceptible than others, and more exposed to the ravages of time. A high sense of grandeur contracts with years something of intolerance and of hardness; and Fontenelle thinks that this could be instanced in Corneille, who "did not indeed lose the inimitable nobleness of his genius, but who in later life mixed with it something dry and inflexibly severe. He had carried in his best years lofty sentiments as far as nature could admit of their being carried; but at length he began from time to time to push them a little farther." Be that as it may, "it is in vain," as Montesquieu remarks, "that an austere morality seeks to efface those traits which the greatest of artists have graven on our hearts." And, in point of fact, "the loftiest

* Lett. 802.

virtue," says Balzac, "is not to this degree savage. It does not destroy nature; it only corrects its imperfections. It can be just to all, but it can also show special favour to a few. It puts charity before every thing. The stranger it receives as a host, and the barbarian as a Greek. It has personal friendships, and does not espouse every one that it loves." It was thus inspired that the Church acted when St. Gregory the Great, sending missionaries to England, advised them to "leave to these new Christians their rural fêtes, their innocent banquets, and their temporal joys, in order that they might more willingly be brought to taste the consolations of the Spirit*." But let us take another example. "There was one thing," says the Duc de Saint-Simon, speaking of his visit to a certain religious house in the diocese of Paris, "that I did not hear from the prior or monks of the abbey of Orcamp, but which I learned in the neighbourhood, and which deserves not to be forgotten for the beauty and rarity of the action. The prior and monks, about thirty years ago, found out that two children, descendants of great benefactors to their abbey, were in want. They took them under their roof, educated them, not with a view to their becoming members of that community, but to fit them for taking their proper place in the world, making them learn what belonged to their condition. So they set themselves to work effectually to have them enter the army, at that time the only career seemed suitable, bought commissions for them, and every winter defrayed the expenses of their equipages in the abbey itself. Each spring they gave them a purse for the ensuing campaign, and continued to provide for them as long as these two young gentlemen would accept their assistance. These monks," adds the author, "rich as they are, are in veneration all the country round, and," he adds, "truly I think they deserve to be so†."

This respect for social exigencies and for common duties in men of such transcendent vocation, is not a fact that one ought to pass over in silence in the times we live in. But, indeed, formerly it would not have been esteemed quite so rare as the

* Vide the remarks of Ozanam, La civilisation au cinquième siècle.

† Saint-Simon, Mém. tom. xvii. 246.

duke would have us suppose. There is an anecdote, for i
stance, related of Clement XI., which shows how little th
pontiff would have been disposed to fall in with the views
those sages of the present day who are for esteeming nothi
excepting what is an integral part of theology as they concei
it, and who have no scruple in letting us collect from the tend
of their writings that a war to propagate religion would in t
present state of affairs be an excellent thing. It is said th
one day complaining of the misfortunes of his time to Cardi
Lambertini, the latter asked if his holiness referred to the d
putes in France about the bull Unigenitus. "No," answer
the pope, "it is not that which troubles me; it is the Germ
troops which ravage the ecclesiastical states. If faith should
lost in France, a thousand apostles would rise up again to pre
it anew; but if these soldiers should have ruined our count
all the apostles of the world would not restore a cabbage."

There are not wanting now-a-days a few grave people w
would be rather shocked at such a reply. In fact, through i
of the human spirit, there is no knowing to what lengths so
men will not go. Let us hear Balzac describe a certain anci
character, who has always some successors to play the sa
part that he did. Belike this is a man of that quirk. "
read," he says, "of Cleon, a man of extravagant probity, w
being called to the government of the republic, commenced
administration by something very new and strange. The fi
day he sent for his friends to come to him, and when all w
assembled, he began a discourse which quite stunned th
He said he had invited them to his house to drive them o
and to say that in fact while a private man he had been th
friend, but now that he was a governor he thought it necess
to renounce all friendship with them. He thought that this
claration was a great piece of virtue, an act of heroic probity
the finest thing that had been done at Athens from the time
Theseus to Cleon. He thought that a statesman ought to h
public enemy, and in proof of his rigour that he should
aside all his inclinations and all his friendships,—all the bo
of nature and of society. I have seen in my time," adds Ball
"some of these false just; I have seen them, in order that t
integrity might be admired, and that all the world might ac

them of favouritism, take the side of a stranger against that of a relation and friend, though justice was on the side of the relation and friend. They were ravished to decide against a party that had been recommended by their nephew or their cousin-german, which was the worst office they could have done to a good cause. If there were many competitors for a place, they asked it for a stranger, and not for one they knew to be worthy. I protest I do not exaggerate; I am only telling you what I have known personally. It was in them rather oddness than cruelty, more intemperance than premeditated malice. But these false serious people," he says elsewhere, "are worse than ridiculous. They quit the common and the good, to find the extraordinary and the bad"—in accordance with which view Butler takes "notice of the danger of over-great refinements, of going beside or beyond the plain, obvious, first appearances of things upon the subject of morals and religion. The least observation," as he says, "will show how little the generality of men are capable of speculations, therefore morality and religion must be plain and easy to be understood, appealing to what we call plain common sense as distinguished from superior capacity and improvement. Persons," he adds, "of superior capacity and improvement have often fallen into errors which no one of more common understanding could." M. de Sacy makes the same remark. "There are examples," he says, "to show that in order to be thought above vulgar goodness and common morality persons have fallen into strange declensions, and that, having what may be termed virtues of supererogation, they have failed in necessary qualities*." "What a monster is it, good heavens!" exclaims Balzac, "to see a young woman a sophist, who speaks only in sentences and apophthegms,—to see a Stoic nurse maintaining that all sins are equal." "Shakspeare," as Coleridge remarks, "saw that the want of prominence, which Pope notices for sarcasm, was the blessed beauty of the woman's character, and knew that it arose, not from any deficiency, but from the more exquisite harmony of all the parts of the moral being constituting one living total of head and heart†." He composed the charm of the female character by the absence of

* Variétés littéraires, i. † Lit. Rem.

characters, that is, "marks and out-juttings." Nevertheless, general, the thirst for distinction, interrupting all this order, n only inflames and disquiets many, but seems to create a sort discipline suitable to itself, which is to be imposed on othe "There is even," as Balzac says ironically, "a sort of theolog less rustic and uncivil than the old sort that every one h heard of, which overlooks the common, kind, generous duties humanity, provided men follow some particular advice whi has no relation to them, and have recourse to certain expedien and accommodations that are concerned with a different orde Than such a religion as this not even sectarian fanaticism, which I am tempted now to relate a rather droll instance, c be more fatal to the development of the honourable feelin which actuate ordinary people in their dealings with each oth The instance is somewhat pleasant, though of course whatev discredit it reflects must fall on those only who are at open w with what is either indirectly or directly advocated throughou these pages. A certain boy, then, on the death of his broth to whom he was greatly attached, was told by parties professi what was called in the jargon of the day evangelical principl that by testamentary dispositions of the latter he was becom entitled to a fine house, as it certainly was, and, in fact, wh advertisers would call a palatial mansion; but the pious parti who gave him this information assured him at the same tim that if the brother had lived he would most certainly have ma it over to themselves, that is, to a certain society well known all the separated world from its pretensions to be the dispense of truth in a brief and popular form. This orphan boy, litt better than a child, overwhelmed with grief at the loss of H brother, being at no time, perhaps, what you might call ov shrewd, and at that epoch regarding the said society in a vag way as representing what was to him always venerable, namel religion, gave his consent instantly, in the most innocent wa to the project of making over this new property to those f whom it was said his lamented brother would have intended i and, in fact, he gave his consent with an enthusiastic pleasu as nothing was sweeter or more sacred to him than an act l which he could testify affection for him whom he had just los The thing was done accordingly with fiery speed; but, as t

proverb has it, "l'appetit vient en mangeant," so that after a month had elapsed his eyes became a little opened when the same parties represented to him very gravely that the roof of the house being found in bad repair it was thought a religious obligation on him—in fact that he was bound in conscience—to have it wholly new roofed at his expense. On this second occasion he was not quite so green, as we should say. I forget what reply was given; but, at all events, he heard nothing more about the palace, which wholly slipped from his memory until in later life he beheld it on visiting a celebrated city, where, in one of the finest streets in Europe, it stands, emblazoned with all the insignia of its appropriation,—a monument of zeal no doubt, but not, perhaps, exactly that which, according to the view we are now taking of such matters, can be said to edify. But to return to our own liabilities, and the mistakes of people who are more properly the subjects of our present criticism. Unfortunately there are not wanting instances amongst ourselves of some being involved in what seems to us error of this kind. For example, it has even been remarked in former times of a celebrated and justly esteemed society, with what truth I know not, that in France at least, through extreme devotion to a spiritual end, it seemed to care very little for those of its own who had occupied the chief posts, and served it with greatest skill, and labour, and success, when they became useless to further that end any longer by reason of age or infirmity. Regrets have been expressed at its consigning such persons to a mournful solitude, as if seeming to grudge them even their food. "I have seen three examples of this kind in my time," says the noble author who makes this remark. "They were all men of honour and great piety, to whom I was much attached. All had occupied the most responsible places in their order with the greatest credit. At the age of eighty, one was left in solitude and want under the tiles in a garret; the second, becoming sickly, would have died from want of nourishment if I had not sent him daily food, and even medicines, for five months; the third, in extreme old age, had no better treatment, from which he tried to escape, under pretence of changing air, by visiting me at Versailles, but he died on the fifteenth day after he went back to his own." However,

this tendency belongs not to any one class more than another, but to all minds that are similarly directed. Reverence for an old age that has become of no utility, gratitude for past services, respect for bygones,—all this savours too much of what is natural, perhaps even of what is thought human superstition, to please those who condescend not to what is common.

Then, under some circumstances, with persons of lower breeding, this disposition, with its consequent neglect of ordinary things, produces still worse results,—in fact, moral enormities for which there is no name; and it is in allusion to these that Cervantes, in his tale of Rencondele and Cortadillo, expresses his astonishment at the feeling of self-security manifested by the thieves, and at their confidence of attaining heaven while neglecting ordinary duties, such as confession and restitution, but fulfilling certain devotions of their own invention, while stained with robbery, murders, and sacrileges unrepented of. These of course are rare instances, and the result of a state of society that no longer perhaps exists any where, but there is a general consequence to be apprehended at all times; for it matters not what may be your genius, or what the grandeur of your vocation, only set aside common things in favour of your transcendental principles, which, if true, even require them, though you seem to be ignorant of it, and there will be very strange effects produced. No doubt at this period of the nineteenth century in which we are living you will not see a return of such brigands as Cervantes describes, though for all that you will have to keep your accounts with men of transcendental principles in greater order than you might think there was occasion for,—a consideration one must let pass for what it is worth; but you will witness many results by no means agreeable, and that are not exactly in harmony with the sweetness of a serene hour. Yes, grave sir, it is all quite true. You may have persons full of supernatural views and portentously deficient as to all the common virtues of humanity, of those obligatory on parents and friends, children and subjects; you may have a man avaricious, cruel, and unnatural to his sons, stingy to such a degree that, as Anthrax in Plautus says, "he grieves to throw away the water when he washes, or even the parings of his nails;" and all the while, "Dî vostram fidem!" regular

at church. You may have theological journalists pursuing every one right and left with the most envenomed bitterness, and without the least regard to what such provocation may lead them to commit, and all the time assuring the world that "not one of their adversaries has ever succeeded in creating within their breasts a feeling of hatred," as if they were actually echoing such lines as Molière's,—

> "O ciel, pardonne-lui comme je lui pardonne.
> Je ne garde pour lui, monsieur, aucune aigreur;
> Je lui pardonne tout; de rien je ne le blâme,
> Et voudrois le servir du meilleur de mon âme:
> Mais l'intérêt du ciel n'y sauroit consentir."

You may have, without the least personal intimation of what was awaiting you, somebody driving up to your door one fine morning with an equipage that bespeaks his own humility, and as a man of paganized imagination would say, furnished with his canisters and coronets, as if about to perform the simplest and most kind act in the world, the expediency of which did not admit of two opinions, or of a moment's question,—in order to—but one may as well not pursue that hypothesis. You may have—but no, it is useless proceeding thus, describing what in that case you may have. It would be difficult rather to say what you may not have, unless it be a serene hour.

But let us get back to common things, and leave those who turn from them when presented in this elevated sphere.

"What is wisdom, what is charity or goodness, we all know," says Richard of St. Victor, "and we prove by daily experience*." But observe that while knowing such things with common Christians, and in their manner, we, so far as relates to these every-day matters, have peace; whereas when we seek vainly and inordinately to know more about human duties, uneasiness, trouble, discussion, doubt, and extravagance are apt to creep in. The idea of God, for instance, and of what we owe to Him, as M. de Sacy says, is by itself a clear idea. The sentiment of a ruling Providence, with the obligations rising out of it, is so natural! We carry it with us; we live by

* De Tribus Personis.

it. Is not this the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world? But when dry demonstrations are brought in, or extravagant developments, the torch grows dim, and it seems as if this idea and this sense so familiar to the mind of man, both fade away, and are lost in an immense unfathomable depth. Frankly, it would be better to remain with the simple faith of the people and the common creed*. "The common people," says Balzac, "have the knowledge of the first Christians, and of the ancient fathers, Greek and Latin, before there were sums of theology, and before Scotchmen came to Paris crying through the streets Latin and science to sell." What is required in this respect for the kind of enjoyment that our sort of people have in view throughout these rambles, is no less demanded, we shall find on inquiry, by the gravest interests, in regard to which no doubt we should be all agreed if we were all reconciled to common sense; but, as Balzac says, "that is a quarrel which it is not so easy to make up." "The just and virtuous," says Cicero, "is that which is so understood 'communi omnium judicio.'" Nothing has happened in the world since his time to make it otherwise. Richard of St. Victor, though no pagan, I suppose, and what's more, not a man like some of ourselves, perhaps, capable of not practising what he magnified, had no other notion. "You must take heed," he says, "that no singularity appear in you, leading you to neglect common and ordinary duties†." Johnson expressly says, "that such common familiar details," as our ramblers, for instance, are concerned with at home or abroad, upon the river as well as in their cabinets or workshops, "may be made of greater use than the solemnities of professed morality." It was to the reputation for the observance of these common duties that Balzac ascribed the influence even of France as a nation. "It is," he says, "from our good faith having been so generally recognized by foreign countries that those who would resist strength yield themselves up to honesty,—to prud'hommie." He shows the superior importance of the latter in all the circumstances of life to any thing else, with whatever imposing forms it may be accompanied. "Take for example,"

* Variétés littéraires.

† In Cant. Cantic., c. ix.

he says, "the case of oaths. If we have not common good faith, neither the presence of that terrible Arbitror whom we call to witness, nor the sanctity of the altars that we touch, nor the truth of the gospels on which we swear will render them trustworthy. Without that which is understood by every one as good faith, all these pompous and solemn actions are only representations to amuse the vulgar. As for me," he adds, purposely, no doubt, veiling his thoughts under the old drapery, "I would sooner trust the note of a Roman than all the treaties of Carthaginians, and what Regulus promised with a nod of his head than what Hannibal would have sworn by all his gods and all his goddesses."

Upon the whole, one's own serenity, as well as what concerns every one else, seems to require that we should appreciate and love common every-day matters in this last and highest order. Let their aspirations and realizations be ever so great, in order to have such hours as are invoked here, people must not suppose that they are to throw off human affections, as if ceasing to be men, and treat with disdain what relates to the common routine of life. This, at least, is what a poor monk of the middle ages thought—Nicholas of Clairvaux—who probably needed no knowledge of heavenly matters that these later times possess. "Nec enim," he says, "quia in Clarevalle sum, affectus humanos vel exui vel exivi*." It is a source of serenity to think that though it must be acknowledged man is an animal very diversified and many-coloured, though the centaurs and chimeras were not more so, though he is made up, not only of different, but sometimes even of contrary parts,—still that his best and highest state requires an acquiescence in most of the commonest things of life within and around him,—that there are both truth and goodness, not alone in what is commonly said and done, but also in the habit which most people acquire, as it were, instinctively, of omitting what should be neither said nor done; for we should always take into account the goodness and serenity that are involved in the marvellous promptitude of resolution and the custom arising out of it, of men surrounded with temptation, and swarming with thoughts of all imaginable

* Epist. xv.

kinds, being resolved as to what they are not to say or do at the precise moment when the occasion is presented for both words and actions. These considerations will be found to enhance the enjoyment of the hour, when on a summer's evening there is a pleasant spot to receive you, friendly eyes to look on you, music to enchant you, and conversation to send you back to your home and to your labours a wiser and a happier man.

Some will tell you that the soul grows discouraged by the sad spectacle of real things, above all, as we advance in life. But these habits will induce you to be of a different opinion. "I confess," as M. de Sacy says, alluding to complaints of this kind, "such confessions seem to me to be things that are to be suspected. There is plenty of noble though common realities in life to encourage us, without asking for the ideal from history, or without our being left, untouched by criticism, our Romans, and our Greeks."

But it is time to finish this day's expedition and return. We are weary now; and as Ulysses says,

ὥρη μὲν πολέων μύθων, ὥρη δὲ καὶ ὕπνου.

If you prefer finishing in English, you can say with Swift,

"We've squander'd here an hour or more,
So come, all hands, boys! to the oar."

CHAPTER XI.

AMONG places to stop at for the general purpose kept in view during all these expeditions, there is no spot more celebrated than the little island which is situated nearly half-way in the mighty stream between the shores of Twickenham and Ham. They call it Eel-pie, and, in fact, always like Pharos there are wandering men fishing round it with curved hooks.

Your ancient Deipnosophists would not have passed it without long discussions on the excellence of that fish which could induce one of them to say, like a vile wretch as he probably was, "even if about to die, eat it eagerly"—

> "And then compose yourself to meet your fate
> With brow serene, and mind well satisfied *."

At all events, here are the eels as good as ever Strymon or Euleus nourished. You can land on either the southern or northern coast, the former being not always safe off the pier; and I have known one who at his first, and, alas! at his last arrival there found his head and all his body mingling with the water, while his legs were left in "the hollow ship," being submerged, as to his head and shoulders, in a mysterious manner that could not be explained by most of the boat's company, unused to estimate the force of a stream acting on so long and slight a vessel. How tender memories will obtrude when not invited! Well, most of us have such in abundance to fall back upon. However, this is not the moment for such talk. The scenery of the island is rustic to your heart's content. With the exception of the governor's house, which presents a very imposing aspect, the tenements are all constructed of rough wood and thatched. Some of them seem suspended in the trees, others in the air, over the water. There are back woods which, unless to a circumnavigator, seem of unknown extent, in which divers large animals are occasionally seen; but, in general, for many reasons, it is as well perhaps not to venture overland in that direction. The cultivated part where civilization extends is cheerful in the extreme. It is enlivened by prodigious flocks of fowls of most aggressive familiarity, for they will alight on the very table that you and your companions are eating from quietly, to his or her delight, as the case may be. The ring-doves all the while, too, can be heard cooing most lovingly; though inquisitive juveniles will be for dispelling your Arcadian illusions, telling you that they are in a cage just behind you; but you need not turn your head or mind what they say. The population of this interesting island varies very much, being in

* Athen. lib. vii.

its numbers somewhat dependent on the moon, the governess of floods, as unless at high water the navigation in those waters has of late years become fatiguing and subject to divers disasters of an "aggravating" kind, in the way of running aground, though of course Father Thames in no part of his career becomes quite like that "dusty river" at Madrid, as the Marchioness of Villars qualifies the Mançanares, so as to enable a learned man like "the delicate Boissonade," to explain the "pulverulenta flumina" of Statius. Formerly you might have met brilliant company at some of the reunions in these log-houses. Poets from Petersham have been known on a summer's evening to form a centre of attraction here for all favourites of the Muses; but in these "degenerate days" (style like nobility obliges) it must be owned that things look as if there had been rather a falling off in that respect. But come, to use the Homeric way, tell me exactly, and mind you speak the strict truth, what feasting is this now going on, and what is this company of young swells composed of, for there are a good many of them here to-day under the trees? Well, to answer you then, truly and distinctly—

> "No Romans, Greeks, Italians, near at hand,
> True Britons all—and living in the Strand."

You will find also that, as a general rule, their nomenclature would not sound like a beautiful tune, as when the titles of a count of Arethusa and other Sicilian princes are set forth. It will be only a recurrence more or less of the circumstance which a later poet sings of in the lines—

> "'Mongst them are many English youths of pith,
> Sixteen call'd Thompson and nineteen named Smith;
> The rest are Jacks and Gills and Wills and Bills,
> Born near Holborn or Maida Hills."

The male part of the casual visitors, such as are now here, are in fact more distinguished in summer by the whiteness of their hands than the euphony of their patronymics or the grandeur of their titles. Indeed, I have known instances when their conversation with others—brown as a berry, and "true proper felawes" more used to touch at the island, as descendants of

your Nisæan Megarensians, excelling at the oars—actually turned in a complimentary kind of way on the supereminent advantage and happiness of having very brown hands and faces, like Chaucer's shipman, of whom he says,

"The hote summer hadde made his hewe all brown."

Upon the whole the temporary settlers are a good-natured, and, for all their smartness, homely sort of people, very loath to depart, though for divers weighty reasons their residence is seldom prolonged beyond an hour or two. There have been pleasant voyages to that island and back before now, during those interesting intervals that precede a dualized state; there have been returns by moonlight, and by no light, to as great a distance as Westminster, and against stream too more than half the way,—

"And that was at midnight—
The world was still on every side."

At least it was so upon the river. Then was there landed safely with her friends some one, not perhaps in point of daring exactly framed by nature for such late navigation, and who, after once getting her heels out of the boat at Whitehall, felt no great desire to repeat the voyage through the ambrosial night, especially since there has been so much talk about a pernicious odour, with which the river lower down is said to be infected, though, probably, as Homer, who knew somewhat about every thing, would tell us, it is caused by the seals that no doubt exist in numbers near the Isle of Dogs. Still were that fragrance even dissipated, having once made such a distant voyage, persons of this kind will not wish to repeat it, however gloriously the whole thing in somebody else's eyes may have gone off. Happily they have not now-a-days to suffer what the beautiful Duchesse de Nevers had to undergo from her husband, who used to make her rise of a morning and enter her carriage without her or his servants knowing any thing about it beforehand, and set off on an excursion to some place as distant as Rome without the least preparation having been made, or even without his having himself thought of such a thing three days before *.

* Saint-Simon, v. 291.

Well, leaving such forced marches to pressgangs, as not to be thought of in the present state of civilization—for assuredly our Jennies and Pollies would open their eyes if you proposed treating them like that—"ça ne se fait pas," as the French say—it is pretty clear that during our expeditions, so free and voluntary, there is plenty of opportunity for discussing many things, whether grave or gay. We are now afloat again. Come, then, as Cephisodorus, the old poet, says, "Where shall our conversation rise?" A very remarkable quotation that, I take it. But there must be a preamble first to put you in tune after all this topographical jollity. So be silent, and attend. "With what caution," exclaims Richard of St. Victor, "ought we to destroy the perturbations of the heart*!" It looks as if he, at least, this great Dantesque guide, would not disdain the idea of seeking serene hours, and attaching some degree of importance to them, even though they were to pass in order to suit our times, as we might say, aping philosophy, on a sort of juvenile ramble, or in a flower-garden hearing music, and all as if in obedience to the Horatian precept—

> "Tu, quamcumque Deus tibi fortunaverit horam,
> Grata sume manu, nec dulcia differ in annum;
> Ut quocumque loco fueris, vixisse libenter
> Te dicas."

Let us for this day's reflections occupy ourselves with considering how necessary it is to calm down these perturbations under some of their worst forms, as when they produce or dictate injustice, intolerance, and disloyalty to the state, all evils of a social or political nature, but also such as may creep in anywhere, and prove themselves subversive of the serenity of each individual mind that succumbs to their infection. One may add in Spenserian fashion,

> "The subject for this day need not be long,
> Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song."

Our excursionists, then, in the first place, must not think of purchasing their serene hours by any act unjust towards others,

* De Exterminatione Mali, c. 19.

which they may think needful for that selfish end; as when Louis XIV., after making his will—in allusion to some sinister influence of the back stairs, said to the queen of England, and to men of the parliament, "qu'il avoit acheté son repos," and that the dispositions of his will had been extorted from him, and that some persons had constrained him to do what he did not wish, and what he believed he ought not to do *. Serenity purchased at such a price as this turns out to be only counterfeit, and the speculator after his ruinous outlay gains nothing. In general they must each have a great stock of natural or acquired equity to begin with, and be a lover of fair play, who recoils instinctively from every thing like injustice towards any one, whatever be his nation, religion, party, degree, or character. Castor and Pollux, gods, in the tragedy, proclaim, saying, "Let no one be willing to sail together with the perjured." Well, we, a few mortals, and not very illustrious either, met to fix some day for going out together, have propounded this counsel: let no one enter the same boat with those who are for taking an unfair advantage of another, or for acting or speaking what is not equitable; as, for instance, blaming in one, and pretending to fix it as a stigma on his particular side, what is found in all alike! for, without distinction of parties, one must say "intra muros peccatur et extra." But such admissions are dangerous, some men will reply; it is for the other side to discover faults; your way is perilous to your friends. Well, this is the objection of your special pleaders, not of Christians and gentlemen. We think it more dangerous to be unfair. All this one might suppose, innocently, was not asking any thing very heroic; and yet, perhaps, the more we think about equity, the greater will seem the qualification implied in it. Chaucer, indeed, shows us one who sought

"To drawen folk to heven with fairénesse."

And of such men still happily there is no want. But out of their consecrated walks, now-a-days, there are moments, at least, when it does seem as if it were really only your poor despised and often maligned class of good fellows, men generally of

* Saint-Simon, xiii. 69.

Davidic hearts, though with no other pretensions but that of being good rowers, swimmers, cricketers, or so on, as the taste may be, who know the meaning of the word. At all events, as the Duc de Saint-Simon says of the house of M. Noirmoutiers, their boat or their summer bower constitutes in general a sort of involuntary tribunal, where it is not a matter of indifference for people to incur blame or approval. Whatever is pronounced there either way, is right and equitable. You may be quite sure on that point.

Of course, no one means to deny that among the grave, respectable, and learned class there are persons who can appreciate the value of their somewhat unlegal turn of mind in this respect. Thus we find one of them lately, a Frenchman and a good Catholic, saying, so as evidently and no doubt consciously to compromise his character with many of his respectable countrymen, "I have never understood what a good cause can gain by disparaging and lowering its adversaries. As for me, I always feel a sincere sorrow when I see the gifts of God corrupted in a superior intelligence. It seems to me that there is both humility and justice in pointing out their brilliancy, even when these lights wander; and that it is only wounded pride and private spite to ignore them because they are gone astray*." Whatever offence may be given by words of this kind, it is needless to point out how much a person with these views must gain in regard to our especial object. Equity contributes to the same end also by disposing men to acquiesce in the diversities resulting from individual character, which would otherwise so irritate their susceptibilities, and to make allowance for them in a human as well as Christian manner. "Certainly," says Richard of St. Victor, "there is a singular quality proper to every distinct human person, by which, without any ambiguity, it differs from every other." If you will believe Sophocles, it is this which determines the colour, as it were, of our actions; for he exclaims "How every man labours in all things suitably to himself!" which line of conduct is not necessarily on account of its distinctive character wrong.

Then again, this disposition contributes to enjoyment by in-

* Le Correspondant.

ucing those who possess it to be of opinion that justice requires ien oftener to reward and praise, and like and esteem, which re all pleasurable acts, than to punish and blame, and feel stranged, which can never prove agreeable. It certainly seems ery commonplace matter to talk of giving people leave to do id to say this and that as they may desire; of placing ourselves the situation and in the mental scenery of others, and then nsidering what we should think of it if men were to act wards us as we sometimes propose to do towards relatives, our quaintances, and our dependents—of bearing others' burdens, id of doing to them what we should wish them to do to us. ut all this, which equity itself dictates, causes minds to become, a very remarkable way, clear and serene. Equity in another nse, if more prevalent, would effect perhaps sometimes a cer- in change in the tone even of literary criticism, which might just and polite at the same time, while rendering certain ges and manners in general not less firm for being more noble. One ought to be just to all the world," says Balzac, glancing these latter consequences; "just to the stranger as well as to ose of our own family. For this reason you do well to praise e eloquence of our excellent heretic, and separate it from his resy. As for me, I cannot help saying that this Huguenot ctor is a great doctor, and wishing that what he has written the resurrection of Christ had been preached in Paris, and t at Charanton." Bossuet evinced the same justice when eaking of Bull, as did Malebranch in his relation with Berke- . "It is only great hearts," says Fenelon, "that know 'com- n il y a de gloire à être bon.'" One might add, perhaps, at it is only men of such hearts who can feel how serene and ous a thing it is to be in this sense of equity good.

We come then to the second consideration, the need of escap- g from the perturbation of intolerance. And in the best of nes it may be well to hear a little about this necessity; as ien Marmontel, speaking on the subject in a company that s already well convinced of it, and being asked why he did replied that the time for working at embankments is when e waters are low.

Some people dislike to hear intolerance blamed. They suspect ere is something wrong then; they rather imagine that in

that case they have to do with a sort of half-Christian, if n
even a dangerous kind of individual. The more silly are th
for such misgivings, if resting on no other foundation. I
them step it elsewhere, and they are sure to take quick, sh
steps whichever way they go, for that is the way with them
all occasions. Such companions are not for those who go
for the day to enjoy a few serene hours. Their presence wo
be likely to spoil all, and defeat the best-projected schemes fo
pleasant day. We must have with us on occasions of this ki
such persons as won't be idly catching at people's words, a
ready to denounce them for no reason at all perhaps, when th
backs are turned. This, too, might be thought asking but litt
and yet experience proves that to acquire such a temper is
some kinds of really respectable people, no very easy matt
though no doubt they must suffer mentally in consequen
For all the while they might say in the words of old Plan
alluding to the state in which logic left them, and from wh
common sense and good feeling could alone deliver them.
am revolving many things in my mind at once, and much
easiness do I find in thinking upon them. I tease, and fret,
wear myself out; a mind that enjoins a hard task is now
master." To be sure, they can discover great examples t
may buoy them up. It is painful to find a noble media
doctor for once recommending a very impassioned and appare
reckless zeal, saying even expressly, that we should be impat
of evil. I should like to know whither would that lead
There is no want of such impatience at any time in the wo
but as far as one could venture to judge silently from the gen
conduct of heaven towards every man, when immediately in
posing in his regard, the most authorized method in gen
might seem to be that recommended in the first book of the
tation, where we read, "If any one being warned once or t
should refuse to yield, contend not with him, but leave al
God, who knows how to draw good from evil." This met
which admits of daily application, requires us to leave obsti
people very much to themselves; to set before them the co
quences that will ensue if they follow an evil will, but if
persist, to let them have their way—and even, what surpa
all mere human indulgence, to assist them in making the be

t. It was so when all the ancients of Israel came to Samuel nd said, "Make us a king to judge us, as all nations have." Samuel was displeased, but the Lord said to him, "Hearken to he voice of the people in all that they say to thee. For they ave not rejected thee, but me, that I should not reign over hem. Hearken to their voice; but yet testify to them, and oretell them the right of the king that shall reign over them." Then followed a statement of the consequences, which are pretty nuch the same as still follow every analogous line of national onduct—preferment for a few; a general progress in luxury; ons put to do the king's work, or the conscription; a tenth evied for the support of the state, or heavy taxes, which serve o fill the pockets of great officers; nothing on the whole very onducive to the general felicity, least of all to the adornment f the world and to the serenity of hours passed in beholding nd contemplating it; for when the only philosophy received is hat which teaches to pull down and destroy, as is always of necessity the case with people who want to get rid of God, there s not much chance for works of art emanating from mind being eft long standing in the original application that is in their beauty. But the people on that occasion persisted in wishing o be like "all nations;" and then the Lord said to Samuel, 'Hearken to their voice, and make them a king." And then Saul was not alone elected, but actually anointed by the Lord, nd vouchsafed a blessing and a promise of protection*. Here f course there could be no doubt as to what course was to be followed, since there was an express and unmistakeable interention of the Deity; but whatever any one may be disposed to nfer from the precedent, no one is ever left without the knowledge of a divine example to teach the duty of patience and toleration in general, in ordinary matters, in a sense far higher than that which emanates from a mere human influence. But the misfortune is that there are many, at least off the river, who shut their ears when all considerations drawn from it are proposed to them. An old French writer gives an amusing instance of the "impatient zeal" of one, not sitting among rushes on a green bank, indeed, but on what he calls the "fleurs de lis,"

* 1 Kings.

or, as we should say, on the bench or woolsack. "I knew," h
says, "a certain counsellor, fond of sentences of death, who use
to doze sometimes on the fleurs de lis. One day the presider
asking for the votes of the company, he roused himself up an
said, half awake, that his opinion was that the man should hav
his head cut off. 'But it is a question of a meadow,' said th
president. 'Let it be mowed then,' replied the counsellor
Such a man, in other tribunals, would be for ripping up o
grievances, and aggravating fresh ones at every turn. We
least should come off rather badly, I fear, with one who woul
call in question St. Peter for having denied his Master, an
St. Paul for what he had said and done before his conversio
"There are men," says the religious and catholic Balzac, "wh
are cruel and not the less devout. They make all virtue
consist in abusing the Huguenots. O what would not the
achieve in a massacre! How brave they would be against m
asleep! The zeal which, according to the holy Scripture, oug
to devour them, devours their neighbour, and consumes provinc
All they gain from the frequentation of holy things is the co
tempt which springs from familiarity. They only become mo
hardened scoundrels. They love scruples, and forsake no ev
Many of the great," he adds, "have this beautiful devotion
and though it is a mask rather the worse for wear, and too w
known every where, they still make use of it to mystify th
people." There are facts connected with this subject more pai
ful still than these; for unhappily the pages of many of the o
chivalrous romances, which must have denoted the sentimen
of a certain class, and that perhaps not the least generous
society in those ages, are deeply stained, as those of Huon
Bordeaux, with the execrable poison of religious intoleranc
acting in a way of odious cruelty. Well, if it were only t
this reason, it is a happy thing to consider that we have do
with the knights, and taken to the river with the kind of obscu
young gallants and damsels that this poor nineteenth centu
produces; but reflections of this kind do not disturb the sere
hours of minds attached to Christian and even mediæval an
quity, by involving the supposition opposed to historic eviden
that the source of all divine serenity, as we shall see on so
future expedition, was or ever can be made answerable for t

consequences that sometimes attended the intervention of foreign and external influences. No doubt the foul streams of intolerance were at one time, with a formal intention, conducted under ground very near it, so as to affect the neighbouring atmosphere; while, by an unavoidable misfortune, the tidal waters of the world imperceptibly penetrated into it by filtration, as the sea will sometimes slightly affect the taste of wells upon the coast. Those were the times, we must remember, when in England, as Lord Bolingbroke quietly observes, "Popery could ask no favours, because Popery could expect none*." Those were the times when the zeal against Popery ran into a kind of factious fury, as he adds, "we are obliged to confess it did†. When it seemed," as he said, "almost wonderful that the plague was not imputed to the Papist as peremptorily as the fire‡." No one denies, on the other hand, that a spirit of intolerance in times like those, as well as even at an earlier epoch, had infiltrated, as it were, into the mind of even nations that sought by means of it to defend truth. But there is no confounding of two things essentially distinct, and the phenomena should only enhance in us, by the contrast, a sense of the value of that source in its crystalline purity, and even in its intervals of disturbance, as De Sacy remarks, saying so calmly, without any one being able to suspect him of being prejudiced, or of writing through a factious motive, "Catholicism is not responsible for the faults and barbarism of intolerance." The Count de Sommerive was so zealous a Catholic, that the people of Provence used to cry out, when they saw him, "Vive la Messe et Monsieur de Sommerive, qui nous la maintient," for it was then assailed by an influence which they compared to the Durance and their winds, the two other local scourges; but whether he really did receive from the court those villainous orders or not, it is certain that he, for all his zeal, would neither charge his soul nor sully his honour by measures of persecution. "The revocation of the edict of Nantes, which caused such pain to those who had the interest of religion most at heart, has not closed our eyes to the incomparable lustre with which Catholicism has caused France"—and he might as

* Dissertation on Parties, 28. † Id. 31.
‡ Id. 35.

well have added other lands—"to shine*." As for the measure he alludes to, the Duc de Saint-Simon says expressly that "while the king heard only praises of himself, good and true Catholics and holy bishops were groaning and lamenting with all their hearts to see orthodox men imitating against errors and heretics what heretical tyrants and pagans had done against truth, against the confessors and martyrs; and that this onslaught on the Huguenots could not draw from Innocent XI. the least sign of approbation, but that he always ascribed it to the policy which sought to destroy a party that had long politically agitated France†." Madame de Maintenon wrote to M. d'Aubigné, saying, "I have heard complaints of you which are not to your honour. You ill-treat the Huguenots; that is not the part of a man of quality. Have pity on people more unfortunate than culpable. It was not by violence that we ourselves were drawn from error. Draw them by gentleness and charity. Christ has given us the example, and such is the king's intention;" and writing to M. de Villette with hopes of converting him, she says, "celui de ceux qui abjurent sans être persuadés est infame." Spirits of the old mark were at no time to be caught by the pretensions of intolerant governments, professing to serve what they injured and dishonoured. Balzac, writing in the time of Louis XIII., could distinguish well enough in matters of this kind. Speaking of Italy under a certain foreign dominion, he says, "It is no longer that free and powerful province. This reigning power has loaded it with chains and burdens; it has taken away all its privileges, violated all its franchises, overthrown it by its own strength. Around this dominion one sees only broken sceptres, tribunals destroyed, the insignia of rights and jurisdiction rent in twain; one hears only the complaints and groans of the afflicted, proud and outrageous commands, bravados added to cruelty, reproaches addressed to misery, and voices which proclaim 'væ victis!' And yet this power protests that it does all for the glory of God; it wants its cruelties to be admired as if exercised under the divine inspiration for the general good of the world. If you believe it, if it were not for its aid religion would have perished from the

* Variétés littéraires. † Tom. xiii. 27.

earth. If it did not succour the Church, the Church would long ago have failed. Christ reigns only by means of its assistance. Yet we see clearly that it persecutes the Church when she refuses to serve its passions. Will it dare to deny that its malicious conduct, for a selfish purpose, caused the northern revolt, and that it was guilty of the first faults of Luther? Who knew not how little it cared for the Pope? Did it not take to its bosom the rising heresy, and encourage its beginning, in order, by dividing the spiritual force of the holy see, and the temporal force of the whole of Germany, that it might weaken both, and eventually usurp both? Did it not at one and the same time order processions in Spain for the exaltation of the Church, and enter Rome as a conqueror at the head of a Lutheran army?" De Maistre took a similar view of that power, which now, thank God! has nobly assumed a different character; and he even went so far as to regard it as being, in regard to its oppressive policy, "the enemy of the human race." He thought that the defeat of the French at Marengo would have been the signal of "l'abrutissement irrévocable de l'espèce humaine." And all the while what was the nature of the religious influence? As for Rome, the President de Brosses, no suspicious witness, writing from it says, "The liberty of thought on subjects of religion, and of speech too for that matter, is at least as great here as in any city that I know." If it had been otherwise, Sully, while on bad terms with most of the principal men of his own religious party, would hardly have been the friend of Cardinal du Perron; nor would he have been less intimate with his colleagues, the Villeroys and the Jeannins, than with the Guises, as soon as the latter were reconciled to royalty.

But leaving the domain of history, on which, nevertheless, sound and accurate views conduce to serenity of mind, at least in the long run, let us come to this conclusion, that whatever at the present day may be some people's opinion respecting the responsibility attached to measures of intolerance, a question which they may have never historically considered in their lives, and for a mistaken solution of which they may consequently, in part at least, be held excused,—whoever wishes to have bright serene hours must get into the habit of exercising, with great simplicity, a patient and tolerant disposition towards

all the world. "What is the use of showing ourselves anywhere," as Lacordaire says, "more rigorous than our common Master and Lord, who said, 'Whoever is not against you is for you?'" During these intervals at least there is a general impression that even those men who are confronted with error in the most fatal and aggressive form, who come forward expressly to warn us against it, and to guide to peace and truth, should be able to render to themselves a testimony like that of the old poet, saying, "that from the day when he first began to let his voice be heard, he denies having attacked men, but that with the spirit of a Hercules he assailed only monsters from whose eyes most dreadful rays were glaring, around whose heads a hundred heads of flatterers were licking, and whose utterance was that of a torrent pregnant with destruction *." If you are to contend, it must be, after this fashion of Hercules, against errors, not men, even when their errors can be likened to such a monster; otherwise your company would not prove desirable even to those on your own side. For take an instance. Must it not have been rather cutting when Agrican said to Orlando, in the green spot at the fountain, "Learned or not learned, you might show yourself better bred than by endeavouring to make me talk on a subject on which you have me at a disadvantage?" It would not be pleasant to hear such a reproof in a boat on the Thames, even from one the most loud in opposition to ourselves. You may think it but fair and seasonable to suggest even there a topic for most grave thoughts when they seem on a wrong road, which, after all, was the amount of the poor Christian knight's offence in this particular instance; but as for anything like rash judgment, vulgar defamation, harsh language or uncharitable thoughts,—if people want to partake of the sort of enjoyment we are bent on, they must be ten thousand leagues above such an atmosphere. It is indispensable that, in regard to such fragrance, their inclinations, their instincts, their philosophy, if they pretend to have any, their doctrine, and as Christians they are bound to have one, and consequently their manners and conversation, on all occasions, great and little, must be clear of offence; as was the case not alone with generous

* The Wasps.

good fellows, but with the wise in all ages. Such men knew how much tolerance is needed even for truth's sake. "Generally speaking," says Balzac, "there being nothing so frank and elevated as the soul of man, it wishes to be treated, according to the nobleness of its nature, with gentleness, method, and address. By these means you gain over the will without much resistance, and after the will, the understanding,—which is so great an enemy to constraint, that to avoid it truth itself will be rejected when you try to force it upon any one." "What deeds," exclaims the old poet, "have been suffered at the hands of men for having revered religion!" Yet intolerance on any side is always doomed to the disappointment of seeing its efforts fruitless. For, as the Spaniards say, "One thing the pony thinks, and another he that saddles it." And they say again, in their humorous and profound style, "Thirty monks and their abbot cannot make an ass bray against his will."

Of course the monsters will appear from time to time as in the preadamite world, formed as if in the wildest caprice of chaotic minds; false, absurd, and even doctrines pregnant with execrable consequences, will be proposed; but the clearest head, as well as the lightest lover of serene hours, will agree with a late author in saying, that "it is not by brute violence you can master them; you must convince them first. If one day this contradiction shall cease, if all men will be able to unite in one communion, having one God in heaven and on earth, one sole country, this truth will not assuredly be imposed on them by force, by the despotism of governments,—which, indeed, have seldom been much inclined in sincerity that way,—it will not be by means of a destructive and tyrannic fanaticism, which has never been enlisted on the side of truth for its own sake; but it will have penetrated into the hearts of men by sweetness, by charity, and by respect for human freedom*." "When God had pity on my tears, and we were permitted to leave that little Geneva of Pau," says Marguerite de Valois, "on coming to Nerac, and while we remained there, our court was so agreeable that we had no reason to envy that of France. The king, my husband, I must say," she adds with a very amiable indulgence,

* Louis Ratisbonne, Impressions littéraires.

for which some can't help thinking there may have been need, "had as fine a retinue of gentlemen, and of as good and noble behaviour, as I have seen any where; there was nothing in them to be regretted excepting that they were Huguenots, but no one there spoke about this difference of religion, and I had perfect freedom. The king and the princess, his sister, of course went their way to the prèsche, and I and my train to mass in a chapel which is in the park, and afterwards we used to meet for walking together in the gardens, or on the long alleys by the river side; and the rest of the day was passed in all kinds of innocent amusement*." Notwithstanding this little picture, those times, indeed, were miserable in every sense, and this poor queen had elsewhere much to suffer for her religion. At Pau, where the Catholic worship was forbidden, she was allowed to hear mass in a little oratory three or four yards long, which was full when there were seven or eight persons in it. "The drawbridge used to be raised," she says, "before mass, lest any of the Catholics of the country, who had an infinite desire to hear it, should assist at it. On Whitsunday some of these poor people contrived to pass in before the raising of the bridge, and were discovered. Pen, who was the king my husband's secretary, immediately ordered them to be beaten in my presence, and then cast into prison, where they remained a long time, and had to pay a heavy fine before they got their heels out of it." It must be confessed, therefore, that the fashion of Nerac, which we are now for recommending, as unhappily there may be still occasion for it, was an improvement on the former mode of proceeding, where such differences existed in a form far more inhuman than can be found any where at present, excepting, perhaps, in what Spenser calls the Land of Ire.

It remains to observe, that we have to avoid or get rid of the perturbations of a disloyal subject, which is a matter strictly in alliance with the two last propositions advanced; for no man can prove a good subject without practising in some points, at least, both equity and toleration.

Happy the people who have not to praise freedom, and declaim on freedom, in consequence of its being identified with them-

* Mém. de M. de Valois, 1579.

selves; and, excepting in Parliament, or at a charity dinner, it is always bad taste, you know, for people to praise themselves. "Strange nation!" exclaimed Otho of Freisingen, taking a different view of their condition, "which wishes not to be governed, but to be advised; where men of an inferior condition, and even artisans, can attain to high dignities, and appear in the guise of gentlemen." These are the complaints of those who would confer all spiritual power on the state, and who, under a disguised cobweb mask of love unto their sovereign, vomit forth their own prodigious malice, pretending to be the props and columns of their safety, the guards unto his person and his peace, while disturbing it most with their false, lapwing cries. The subjects of such a state, thus scorned by the advocate of the old imperial notions of dominion,

"——————— alike free from
Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the vice of republics,"

can be allowed, perhaps, no great merit in having a mind void of the perturbation of bad disloyal subjects. Their only danger on this point, and it is not a visionary one, is the risk of admitting the cares and troubles that perplex the arrogant; and on these disquietudes some might do well to reflect a little, for which exercise at times Richard of St. Victor, in his mystic commentary on the Apocalypse, offers them his assistance. "Babylon," he says, "in her proud heart utters these words, 'sedeo regina'—I fear not to lose my honour and dignity—'et vidua non sum,' for I have my consolation in this world, and I shall not see grief. 'Et omnes qui in longum navigant et qui in mari operantur'—that is, all who endeavour to acquire riches both by sea and land—and they will say, 'Quæ similis civitati huic magnæ?'" So far you might think all was serene; but wait a little. "Kings of the earth," he continues, "and negotiators of the earth, will lament for the ruin of this Babylon*." And even in the mean time the very thought of such a ruin, as within the range of possibility, will cause a sort of panic, and spoil the peace of those who love her with her kind of love, which, as he shows, is wholly of earth, and irrespective

* In Apocalyps. lib. vi. c. 1.

of the belief in a supernal country of which we should all be citizens. Now, he is not a good subject who contributes his mite to augment that pride of a nation which is so well calculated immediately to disturb its serenity, and ultimately to cause its decline and fall.

As far as perturbations of a political nature were concerned, it would seem as if it ought not to have been difficult to avoid them in ancient times under the old Christian monarchies of Europe, which secured a great degree of personal freedom, and the encouragement of what contributes to the happiness and greatness of a people. Some would even go farther back, and point out the serenity of more remote times. When it was a question of showing that good had sometimes followed from sedition, as when the tribunicial power was constituted, Cicero would have us consider this popular movement as a very rare thing. "Could a topic," he says, "so dangerous, so unheard of, so slippery, so new, be treated on without a certain incredible skill in oratory? If all persons," he said again, taking for granted another element of serenity, "who consult for the public good ought to be dear to us, certainly those men above all should be loved by whose counsels, valour, and perils, we retain both our own safety and the dignity of the empire*." Then, in later times, the Augustan reign, as far at least as externals went, seemed singularly favourable to this kind of enjoyment. "It must be owned," says Balzac, "with permission of the republic, that the age of Augustus formed a very subtle judgment of things, went a great way to purify reason, and threw light on many subjects. It was the golden age of art and discipline. Every thing was polished and refined in this reign; every thing learned and ingenious in this court from Augustus to his valets." It is, however, but doing this writer justice to remark, that he reserves his unqualified praises for the Christian monarchy of his own country, at a time when, in spite of modern reactions, it was certainly far from being, in theory, either absolute or despotic. We may deem his eulogy excessive. Wickedness under the feudal forms was for the lower orders a portentous source of misery; and any thing now that looks like winking at

* De Oratore, ii.

it must be in execration,—the despotic power assumed in later times by certain ministers of state, and the scenes which are revealed by the history of Vincennes alone, are enough to make us wary when questions of this kind arise; but the passage is worth noticing to show how brave and noble minds could reap exemption at that time from all the anxieties and troubles from which we would now escape. "One has never seen," he says, writing in the reign of Louis XIII., "so great a provision for the felicity that politicians seek. We do not fear for the state now; we hope it will be eternal. All the parts of this proud gigantic mass, that have been so long trembling and tottering, are now established. All is arranged with an admirable justice; not a stone projects out of its place. There is nothing to offend the most delicate eye. For the first time calumny is silent. There are no more faults to disclose; there is hardly any thing left to wish for." It must be remembered, however, I repeat it, on occasion of hearing such testimonies, that the ideal of this sort of government, which was a state without paradoxes, and a state in which the abuses of the feudal system were at least controlled, and the tyranny of ministers looked on with abhorrence, comprised the notion of its proving favourable to personal freedom and to the dignity and happiness of all classes subject to it. It is not to be confounded with the governmental type of the Reformation, or with that of the later revolution, which forms rulers like the first Napoleon, who, as some one said of him, tell us, by way of authorizing freedom, to open our mouth and to close our teeth. Nor is it to be identified with absolutism at any epoch, which generally too supposes an impiety under some form or other which leaves no resource or hope to subjects. "For a despot to be religious," as Sophocles observes, "is no easy matter." But with royalty, distinguished from despotism, was then associated the idea of power delegated by heaven; anointed, independent of the feudal conditions, it was regarded as opposed so far to feudalism, which held all by its sword. Even when governmental ideas every where in this respect, owing to a general revolt and the rise of new opinions involving a reaction, had first begun to change for the worse, we find, as in the pages of Philippe de Commines before that period, what are termed at the present day liberal principles

proposed and upheld. They were adopted even by kings, as by Henry IV. for instance, in the administration of the provinces, in his relations with the parliament and council of state, in matters of finance and taxation, in commerce, art, and industry. We find that the first of the Bourbons desired a monarchy tempered by the control of parliament in regard to taxes, by the liberty of the press, and that of speech*: while, as Sully also tells us, it was another of his projects, as if he hoped to govern his kingdom as one of us would like to see governed a party in the pleasure-boat, "de disposer par son exemple toutes les dominations de commander tant amiablement à leurs subjects, et désirer d'eux choses si équitables, qu'elles les disposassent à leur obeyr volontairement et gayement." Even later there were not wanting counsellors to admonish governments not to depart from the spirit of the Christian monarchy in order to counteract that revolutionary licence which was playing its part in a mask of religion by means of absolutism. Balzac was one of these wise friends of power; and addressing it, he says, "It is not in counterfeiting thunder, or in carrying a trident in one hand and the globe of the earth in the other, that kings make themselves like the Eternal; but it is in governing their people wisely, in delivering the weak from the oppression of the strong, and in doing good to all the world. It is not the power of God which men can imitate, but it is his goodness." "I vote," said De Maistre, "for the best governments,—that is, for those that confer the greatest possible happiness on the greatest possible number of men." It is clear that no one with these views would have voted for such a revolutionary government as that which in France, carrying on war under the pretence of propagating liberty and happiness, thought it a sufficient excuse (if we take for its representative the historian who identifies himself with it) for plundering the Swiss government, to say that it was inconsistent in the Swiss to complain of taking away their money; but that the fact was, the Swiss are, like all mountaineers, brave, but of an extreme avarice†; which measure with its mode of defence, presented at all events a contrast to

* Poirson, Hist. de Hen. IV.

† Thiers' Hist. de la Rév. vii. 243.

the theory of monarchy in the ancient times of Christendom, when taxes were only levied with consent of the people. In fact, as Lacordaire remarks, the revolution of the eighteenth century was not the father of what he terms the wise political principles of the nineteenth. It rather was an interruption to their natural growth. Our age desires civil equality, political freedom, and religious liberty. Are not all these the fruits of Christianity? Had not the middle ages conceived them? and, as far as the circumstances of the time permitted, sought to realize them? for was not that of which they had least need during the union of faith, namely religious liberty, the natural and inevitable consequence of the dissidence which arose towards their close? From the day of separations there was only the choice between a reciprocal persecution dangerous for all, and sooner or later hateful to all, and a liberty honourable to the strong and the weak, not arising from indifference while content with the proselytism of the intelligence and the heart; and if the Church was slow to pronounce absolutely as to the general principle, was it not only that hating ruins even the most necessary, it waited for that revelation from experience which is so worthy of its profound and patient wisdom?

Nevertheless, even when breathing the atmosphere of those principles, and under governments swayed by them, there are seldom wanting men full of disquietude and perturbation, through their reckless desire, with or without good intentions, of weakening or overthrowing them. Antiquity was not left in ignorance, as the lines of Sophocles can attest, that "it is the part of a bad man when a private citizen will in nothing deign to listen to those who are set over him." Yet, in modern times, this very part was thought to argue a true public character and a good citizen. "A seditious song, or a treasonable speech, finds more favour," says a famous author, "with some people in the old country than building a church, that's a fact." And France remembers still, with trembling, the times—not exactly suited for sitting in a summer-house—as later, those that far exceeded all insolent fictions of the tragic scene, when through want of common prudence, as Balzac says, there were the two parties of League and Huguenot, made up, at least in the sequel, of men more careful to disturb governments than to defend religion,

under whatever form they might pretend to understand i
But such men and nations can neither enjoy a serene interv
themselves, nor suffer those with whom they are in relation
have one.

Balzac, certainly the last man in the world to offend again
equity, or injure any one on account of his religious view
ascribes this spirit of political and factious opposition to a whol
party of his countrymen. "The Huguenots," he says, "a
always on the look out for something to enable them to disper
themselves from obedience. If they thought that the king t
morrow would turn a Huguenot, they would be Catholics th
very day." Then, later, in the time of Mazarin, there was t
party called the Importants, from the air of consequence th
they used to give themselves; and these were assuredly as litt
qualified as the former to promote serenity either in public or
private; for these disagreeable people made a habit of blami
every public act, right or wrong, affecting a sort of melancho
a kind of depth of forethought, and of quintessenced sublimit
which separated them from other men. Cardinal Bernis,
plaining why he regretted less residing out of Paris, said th
conversation there had become too political for his taste. "M
and women," he says, "in that city think of nothing but h
to govern the state. One hears only a continual and wearison
dissertation by all these little modern Machiavels, and 'ri
n'est plus plat qu'une politique superficielle*.'" Then, in st
later times, how many revolts and revolutions sprung from th
reading of the old Roman books! Then we have patriots

> "Convened at midnight in outhouses
> To appoint new rising rendezvouses."

As another poet says,

> "There Brutus starts and stares by midnight taper,
> Who all the day enacts—a woollen-draper."

Then we have young men, readers of Tacitus, meeting on ce
tain days every month, not to enjoy a holiday or have a pull
a river, but to conspire against tyrants. "Why, O silly youths

* Ap. Sainte-Beuve, Causeries du Lundi, tom. viii.

could a French author say to them, "hide yourselves in darkness? You are only twenty; the sun is in the heavens, the air pure, the tree in blossom, the wood harmonious, the water sparkling, and you conspire, oh fie! in holes and corners, and against whom? Where are the tyrants? Is it these kind, respectable, benignant old men? Oh, for shame! Leave your friend Brutus, sheath your poignards; go out for a holiday, go out in peace, and leave conspiracies for another time*." In vain he might address them thus.

> "They 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
> And wish the estate o' the world were now undone."

Never had Europe beheld a more cruel, and implacable, and unreasonable opposition, and, what is curious enough, this very last cited author confesses that he wrote for it. Alas! it is not only the lovers of serene hours in our sense who have to suffer from this element, which still incontestably exists, in the modern society, with all its good sense. Analyze it, like the celebrated French critic occupied with the character of one to whom he ascribed it, and what do you find? a ferocious joy that would shake lions into civil streets and citizens to their dens,—a degree of what is thought felicity that makes the aspirant desire self-destruction. "But," he continues, "a man who wants to kill himself must be rather suspected when he offers his assistance as a pilot; nor can he, methinks, have any lively desire to promote the serenity of others who aspires for his own part to such a kind of happiness, with reverie and ennui, savage, greedy, and insatiable, with Epicurean desires, like electric fire playing over this vacuum, and a principle of savage honour to hold and master them all." With such coursers for the chariot, and such a guide to direct them, we may expect to see men tempted every moment to skim like Phaeton the border of the abyss in quest of emotion and celebrity, though they were to perish the next minute. But people whose character is composed of such elements, ready to stake all for all, entering, like René, with ravishing delight upon the month of tempests, at the least thing filled with disgust for the earth which they want to govern, who would devour centuries in a day, and who

* Jules Janin.

are ready at the least contrariety, at the smallest defiance, t
fire the ship, and consign themselves and all the ship's com
pany, that is to say, all the world, to destruction in the depth
in order that there may be only a glorious death upon th
ocean,—such pilots, such patriots, such children of caprice an
fantasy, whatever they may be deemed fit for in regard t
changing or guiding the government of nations, are, at a
events, not exactly cut out for belonging to a party like ours o
the Thames, where none of us are grown, or likely to grow
desperate. Clearly all such cabals and factions must be anathem
to those who, like our excursionists, are desirous of enjoying
serene hour. As Mme. Swetchine says, writing to the Duches
de la Rochefoucauld, "Even the pulling out of a newspap
would be for them an evil moment in one of these peaceful i
tervals that are embalmed with a spirit so different from th
of the world; for this way of returning to it is very painfu
since the train of thoughts which it evokes appears for the m
part either a threat or a sentence of condemnation*." Up
the whole, those who seek true serenity must in a general wa
practise the celebrated precept of Pythagoras, and "make war
by taking exercise, "against maladies of the body, war again
ignorance in the mind" as far as bringing to bear on all subje
common sense with all its great legitimate results, war "again
sedition in the state" by being good fellows on and off the riv
and war "against discord in private houses" by returning
them with the dispositions exercised in serene hours.

In fine, we have still flourishing even in England the obscu
intruder who, without any personal importance assuredly,
much familiarity with the classics, is for turning conversatio
into a political debate,—like those the old comic poet laugh
at as sitting in the barbers' shops. So we have coming forwa
"the mumble-news," who never omits reading the journal whi
is best calculated to justify his own discontent,—who, with t
same wise object in view, knows all about committees, division
intrigues, and public measures. The poet says of such a one,

> "Society becomes his glittering bride,
> And airy hopes his children."

* Lettres, ii. 20.

What a nice fellow that! Now, if, as most people are free to confess, our man with a grievance is generally voted a bore, what, I would ask, must he expect to pass for on the river or the heath side? "On entering among them," says an odious demagogue of himself, describing how he once forced his way into a merry party, "I perceived clearly that my presence troubled their gaiety, which is credible enough, since I am the terror of all enemies of the nation." I rather think that the least advanced of his school would find that his own arrival produced similar results even though there were no "nymphs," as the former wretch called some of the company, for him to sneer at. Indeed, such a one is soon at open war with us, saying reproachfully, like the blacksmith, though without his cause for complaint,

"——— Thou hast ever thy jest and thy ballad!
Ever in cheerfullest mood art thou, when others are filled with
Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only ruins before them.
Happy art thou, as if every day thou hadst picked up a horse-shoe."

We don't want to exclude those who combat manfully against cruelty, and bigotry, and intolerance, and oppression. We mean not to disparage those who would at any time defeat corruption, which is as dangerous whenever it exists as was prerogative in former ages, according to the remark of a great English statesman, when, to use his significant expression, "the revolution was but a renewal of our constitution*;" nor are we insensible to even the sacred dignity of all those vital elements which preserve a constitution like our own that can be traced to a government as old as Moses, and that was approved of at that time by God. Be all due honour given to its friends and defenders! Let such men be every where welcome; but that is not the province of the individual we are concerned with. This is a mere theorist, mad after change, a wretch who is never himself at rest, or content to let others rest, who, if he had wit enough, would try to reach the axle where the pins are which bolt this universal frame, that he might pull them out, and pluck all into chaos with himself! He belongs to "the nation of grumblers;

* Dissert. on Parties.

he is," as some one says, "the writer of grumbling letters t editors, and of grumbling articles in support of these letter the maker of grumbling speeches, and the tuner of a grumblin conversation,—the only safe neutral ground on which suc people, as strangers, can contrive to meet with the completes sense, that they can conceive, of ease and comfort;" but thei sense is that of men sickly and disordered. Grumbling may b of use as a sort of safety-valve, but no one would like to breath the sort of atmosphere which renders it necessary. The di position cannot be rendered innocuous even by such issues. I argues a dangerous and sometimes fatal degeneracy; but we ar only concerned with it in its mildest form. Independent the of the evil which freedom itself and the whole state may hav to suffer in consequence, it is obvious that such views and habit are diametrically opposed to the project of those possessin healthy minds, who go out for the day in search of a sere hour, which is all that we are engaged to demonstrate. Thes latter, at all events, must be good and loyal subjects, at lea while we have any thing to do with them. For we cann apply to our party the Macaronic line of Drummond, and say,

"Nam quidam expressly venere ut speechificarent."

Our kids may even possibly belong to a race or family of mind opposed by nature and instinctively hostile to that which French critic has recently distinguished as the race of publi men, the Richelieus, the Cromwells, the Williams of Orang and the Pitts. There may be between them and such goveri mental characters, through no fault or choice of their own, kind of hatred of race, an antagonism in the blood and tempe rament; but the balance of good qualities will not be less, pe haps, in their favour, while obviously their chances of bein serene are increased a thousandfold; and after all, as Philipp de Commines says of some in his time, "these busy trouble lords and wise men, who could see so far into the future, wer not prepared for being told that their life could not be lon enough to behold the half of the things that they foresaw though so it proved; for they all finished in the midst of thei labours and misery, and in a very short space of time, the on

after the other*." And, besides, there may be other sources of antagonism between them; for hear what one of the most just of statesmen has lately acknowledged respecting these great public characters. "Personality," says Guizot, "is apt to glide in to mix with the most sincere patriotism. Even for the most honest men politics do not constitute a work of sanctity. They have necessities and obscurities, which, whether we will or no, we accept in suffering them. They excite passions, and lead to occasions of complaisance for ourselves, from which no one, I believe, if he sounds well his conscience after the trial, can be sure to have completely escaped; and whoever is not content to endure without pain the weight of these complications and imperfections, which are inherent in public life, will do well to confine himself to private life and to pure speculation†." Not to be wholly despised, therefore, are our humbler pupils, who hold that they at least may be content with some spot where, as Calderon de la Barca says, "Spring has call'd together in a bright and beauteous garden her sweet parliament of flowers," with the stream for the opposition, and the boat's helm for government, and the swans for committee, and the crows for orators, and the gabble of juveniles for the political journal, and so leave the nation to grow just by degrees and of its own accord, which possibly, as some think, it will sooner do if let alone—and the Parliament at Westminster to manage what concerns it and what it can effect, without transferring a discussion on its grievances, which are not always those of quiet, just, innocent people, loving what is fair and equitable, to an eyot of the Thames or a hollow in Hampstead Heath. At the most they must not exceed the limits of our late poet and reformer, who describes himself as being, in fact, at the noisiest period of his career, "nothing but a poetic student, appearing in politics once a week, but given up entirely to letters almost all the rest of it, and loving nothing so much as a book and a walk in the fields‡." We want, in short, persons capable at moments of other thoughts besides those of suspicion, jealousy, and intolerance; fellows in whose pockets, if they fall overboard,

* Liv. iii. c. 8.

† Mémoires de M. Guizot.

‡ Leigh Hunt, Correspond. ii. 86.

no discontented paper will be found. We take with us no "little monsters," as the French lady qualified the gamins of the Paris revolution, but fellows, whether old or young, who, as Coleridge says of boys wrongly introduced, as he conceives, by Ben Jonson into his Catiline's Conspiracy, "cannot be conceived present at any disloyal or even grumbling meeting, without an outrage to probability." We want such company, however you may disparage it, as would offend Marat, and of which he might say truly, as when he obtruded himself on the party, of which we have just spoken, at which Dumouriez was present. "I won't speak of those that were to adorn the fête. 'Probablement la politique n'était pas l'objet de leur réunion.'" We want men who make allowance for the difficulties and even faults of persons in political as well as in every other kind of life; who can show consideration to all sides and respect power, convinced that wish'd liberty ne'er lovelier looks than under such a crown as that of England, and practising, in fact, as we said, in regard to government as well as to all the world, equity and toleration.

Perhaps such views, by those who stay in their houses, will be deemed subversive of liberty, and reform, and nationality, and in all respects very erroneous, though it is a champion of reform himself who tells us "that monarchies and courts, which at least might represent the enjoyment of peaceful times, appear to him salutary for the good and graces of mankind, while Americanisms, which seem opposed to it, seem any thing but either*." But, be that as it may, I believe that those who go forth into the open air to enjoy a serene hour, will be found more inclined to look with pleasure on those who adopt them, like M. de Sacy, who says, "My political life did not begin with opposition to the government. I love power, I love it from judgment and from taste; I have always defended it with pleasure; I have never attacked it without regret and almost remorse. It is so little enviable in my opinion. One owes so much gratitude to those who wish to charge themselves with the horrible burden of governing others†." "Modern history resembles ancient history," says the Count de Maistre, taking a

* Leigh Hunt, Corresp. ii. 87.

† Variétés littéraires.

similar view, "and I learn from it a profound indulgence for all that is done." And after all, in nine out of ten cases it is not the government that injures and violates equity, it is the error of headstrong men in private life, it is their zeal for proselytizing and propagating their own dark conceptions as in Ireland, or, as with us, it is the ignoble cabal in the lower regions of the trading society, which sets and keeps us all by the ears. It was so in Spain and in France, and it is so in England and in Ireland. Certainly, as Fenelon remarks, writing, however, before the rise of revolutionary governments, which in the way of despotism outdo most others, "we are not sufficiently indulgent towards rulers, forgetting their difficulties. Private life, with a little talent for speaking well, conceals natural defects, and makes a man seem worthy of all the places that he has not; but it is authority which tries and discovers." Then with respect to parties in the state, even supposing them wholesome and necessary, as some opine with great show of reason, while other statesmen in the defence of freedom, as Bolingbroke in his celebrated letters, would gladly see them abolished for ever—with respect to these, I say, who does not see what a happy influence, corresponding to the atmosphere we invoke, would follow through even public life, though that does not concern us here, if men were to adopt the advice of Menenius?

> "On both sides more respect.
> Be that you seem, truly your country's friend;
> And temperately proceed to what you would
> So violently redress."

The chorus with Sophocles would dictate the same course at all times and every where, saying, "O that ye had both of you the sense to be temperate! for than this I have nothing better to advise you." Who will approve of such counsels? He at least who loves serene hours, and moreover,

> "Qui didicit patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis."

And after all, as Goldsmith—writing, however, I must again add, before the rise of revolutionary governments—concludes, as if expressly referring to the security of those who study the

serene, after leading his traveller through all nations in quest of the most perfect government:

> "Vain, very vain my weary search, to find
> That bliss which only centres in the mind.
> Why have I stray'd from pleasure and repose
> To seek a good each government bestows?
> In ev'ry government, though terrors reign,
> Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,
> How small, of all that human hearts endure,
> That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!
> Still to ourselves, in ev'ry place consign'd,
> Our own felicity we make or find;
> With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
> Glides the smooth current of familiar joy."

In fine, the interest of such intervals passed amidst the water-lilies or the green bushes, requires that we trust the happiness and security of our country, when all has been said and done, to something higher than the best possible form of human government, or to the ability or even patriotism of any minister or any opposition, of any orators or of any electors, of any sovereign or of any parliament. Some of these things are capable of being instrumental to good, others of them no doubt are excellent and essential. Who can sufficiently estimate their value? But they fail sometimes; "for man is destined to be guided by higher principles, by universal views, which can never be fulfilled in this state of existence." "If there had been only common prudence at that time," says Balzac, "there would have been neither League nor Huguenot. But there is a ruling Providence that watches over the security of states and the prosperity of an unoffending though oppressed people." "Is there wanting any other proof of the existence of a Providence," Benedict XIV. used to say, not perhaps, however, in that one instance waiting long enough, according to the traditional wisdom of Rome, "than to see France prospering under Louis XV.?" Balzac appeals to history in support of such views. "These disorders," he says, "ought to have determined the ruin of France. Nevertheless, our country gave the lie to all its prophets, refuted all the politicians, put an exception to all

general rules. This state has lasted 1200 years, against all human appearances. It is an old debauchee, who has done all he could to kill himself, and who lives in spite of doctors. It is our fortune which has corrected our conduct, chance that has saved us; or, to speak more Christianly, and leave the terms of corrupt usage which still savours of paganism, it is God who has taken especial care of us, and been our guardian amidst the confusion of our affairs; it is his providence which has counteracted our imprudence, and worked as many miracles as we committed faults."

Devoted, and if occasions require, active loyalty, but reposing no less for all its energy and forethought on this great principle of intellectual peace, will be found thus a necessary qualification for the perfect enjoyment of those serene hours,

> "Where union of hearts such empire brings,
> Subjects, methinks, are crown'd as well as kings."

This has been rather a short afternoon's trip, but coming darkness indicates that it is time to send our excursionists back to town to their homes, to bed and to sleep, which whole process, confined to matter of fact, can be effected with strict regard to the modern realities of domestic life, in Homer's high-sounding words, with which we may conclude the day:

> οἳ δ' εὗδειν ὤρνυντο κατὰ πτόλιν, οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτι δὴν
> εἵατ', ἐπεί σφισιν ὕπνος ἐπὶ βλεφάροισιν ἔπιπτεν.

CHAPTER XII.

IT is an evening in August, and two of us are resting, though invited to do so by no inscription placed beneath a statue of Hermes, saying, "Come and repose your limbs awhile under the plane-tree; not confusedly, but as many as are tired by a heavy toil, and thirst after a long course. For there is a breeze and shady seat; and a poplar agitated by the breath of the

zephyr shall soothe you and put to sleep the weariness of young limbs." No such classical invitation, albeit in classic bounds, meets our eyes here; but for all that we are resting, though perhaps rather "confusedly," since our boat is kept from being turned round by the sharp stream along the edge of the Eton meadows, by a pair of rather long grasshopper legs still embarked, though belonging to one who sits all the while on shore by the side of another on the green bank, which is covered with daisies to the brink. This is on the Berkshire shore, and the first spot that you find on it denuded of osiers after leaving the boat-house. The setting sun, which floods with golden splendour the western sky, is shining in both their faces. It is one of those moments of rest which for some unknown reason or another, as there is in a visible way really nothing very remarkable in it, one never, never forgets, or ceases to regard as furnishing ground for the complaint of the old ballad,

> "Yes, I may tell, and fret my self,
> To think on those blyth days I had!"

After some hours spent in sauntering over those sweet fields, so well known to boys of Eton, and through the streets of Windsor, before taking to our boat, the repose itself perhaps counted for something,—but that does not explain why it should be so remembered as "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever." However, let the reason be what it may, it was an occasion afterwards looking back on it (and this looking back—even before death, as in this instance, has removed one of the two—can make eyes sometimes rather moist) to think of what a poet has said, that eternity itself cannot restore the loss struck from the minute. "Are you," demands a great author, "happy in the spot in which you tarry with the person whose voice is melodious in your ear? Beware of parting! When will you meet exactly thus and thus again?" Aye, truly, I should like to know when? —but hear the thought expressed in most soothing verse, by one who probably had never read his lines:

> "Linger, O gentle Time!
> Linger, O radiant grace of bright to-day!
> Let not the hours' chime
> Call thee away;

But linger near me still with fond delay.
Linger, for thou art mine.
What dearer treasures can the future hold?
What sweeter flowers than thine
Can she unfold?
What secrets tell my heart thou hast not told*?"

Might not one think that this sweetness came from our poet's little Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla? But it is getting late, so the song must change to the former poet's farewell:

"Farewell, oh, dream of mine!
We dare not stay;
The hour is come, and Time
Will not delay.
Pleasant and dear to me
Wilt thou remain;
No future hour
Brings thee again."

We slide into the boat; the stream and the sculls, removing one of us for ever from that smiling scene, soon take us to the campshed at Serle's, near the bridge; and having taken a last look or two at the castle illuminated by a golden sky, suggestive, by the way, rather of a different train of thoughts from that in which we had been indulging, the railway, after its own fashion, does the rest.

Richard of St. Victor acknowledges in the preface to his treatise entitled—with no great regard to euphony as we understand it—the Benjamin Major, that "he had much leisure for composing it, and that it will require also a great deal of leisure to read it." Now, though after so many long expeditions, involving much talk and delay, it may seem rather late for us to make the same confession—though our doing so looks somewhat like the dealer in horses saying to an elderly cavalier who was pitched into an area by a horse that he had induced him to mount as free from all vice, "My Lord, I won't deceive you, but the hanimal does kick sometimes"—though in this manner the admission may come from us with rather a bad grace, we

* A. Proctor, Legends and Lyrics.

must, at this stage of our proceedings, plead guilty to requiring a good deal of patience and leisure as a qualification, not alone necessary to make our discussions palatable, but also in order that people may be fit to join in general the sort of excursions of which it is question here. "I won't deceive you," as that artful dealer said, they must have patience sometimes, and like to enjoy leisure; but then we owe it to ourselves, as the noble phrase is, to distinguish and give every one to understand, that we mean such a leisure as implies intellectual freedom, and, after paying all debts of obligation and of honour to whom they are due, a free homage paid to the supremacy of mind.

It is this supremacy which shall form the subject for our reflections to-day, and a very important one it is, let me tell you, according to the common judgment of mankind, and recognized as such even by all antiquity, saying, by the mouth of Sallust, "Dux atque imperator vitæ mortalium animus est," and by Anaxagoras affirming that mind is the sovereign king of heaven and earth, Νοῦς βασιλεὺς οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ γῆς.

In some circles are found men, as in the cities of Greece formerly, restless, avowing that they want to kill time, and, in order to succeed in that sad enterprise, noisy, violent, and inquisitive, always busily in search of news and distinction in the places of public assembly. And, indeed, in these later times, as Madame de Stael remarks, the events of the Revolution have accustomed us to regard as alone possessing importance, a knowledge of circumstances, of facts, and of their immediate agents; in other places we have men exclusively but almost ceaselessly employed about their own affairs or professional labours, though what's to come of it all heaven only knows; like Chaucer's Sergeant of Lawe,

> "No where so besy a man as he ther nas,
> And yit he semed besier than he was."

Or resembling Lawyer Dowling in Tom Jones, who had so much to attend to that he wished he could cut himself into a thousand pieces, that he might at the same instant be here and there and every where, wishing himself like Fastidious Brisk, too, sometimes an ubiquitary, for love of the same objects. In neither of these classes does there appear to be much chance of having this

supremacy practically acknowledged; for, in fact, nothing that seems directly and exclusively to refer to it, or to depend immediately on its recognition, is by them thought very much of. "Formerly," says Balzac, "men of moderate abilities admired what was beyond them. Now their judgment follows their power; for they approve only of what they can themselves do, and they blame what is above them." We live certainly in much better times than when the President de Brosses flourished; but still we can trace, in faint traces here and there, a certain family likeness in our generation to that which he described when he said, "Our age has no taste for pure literature. Science only is in vogue, and a man now-a-days has almost to apologize for doing what was so honourable two hundred years ago. Is there not," he adds, "reason to fear that by neglecting pure literature, we may go back to barbarism?" "Si je ne me trompe," he concludes, "nous avons déjà fait quelques pas de ce côté."

A kind of savage state, "La sauvagerie," as Sainte-Beuve says, "is always at best of times only two steps from us, and as soon as ever we relax our efforts it recommences*." "In spite of all the efforts of a philosophic age," said Rivarol, "the most civilized empires will be always as near and as liable to barbarism as the most polished iron is to rust."

M. de Fontanes mentioned to a friend, that when he was grand master he used almost always to find four hours for literature before going to his office. Perhaps it would not be so easy at present in England to name men similarly placed, who pay exactly this kind of tribute to mind. At all events, the study of literature, without regard to the political or interested object that may be connected with it, is not so much diffused as formerly. That fact is quite certain. If we were contemporaries of Cicero, I doubt if every one of us would agree with him in saying, as if he had foreseen and desired a Victoria cross for himself, that they who cultivated eloquence brought more dignity to the Roman people than those who stormed the castles of the Ligurians, to so many of whom were given triumphs. He will grant, indeed, with our philosophers of the reigning school, that

* Causeries du Lundi, i.

it more concerned the Athenians to have solidly-built houses than the most beautiful ivory statue of Minerva; but yet for his part, unlike those gentlemen apparently, he would rather be Phidias than the best of good carpenters. But literature, they say, proves nothing, and all its objects could be expressed in fewer words. They seem to regard it as mere idle or French trifling. But even were it proved that mathematics and physical sciences possess a utility more manifest than literature, it would be no less certain that the value of the latter is as real, and that in its way it is quite equivalent to the other. The French Academician, who complained of the undue preponderance in favour of the sciences, cites the words of Cicero, "Non quantum quisque prosit, sed quanti quisque sit, ponderandum est*." Of course, he admits that the latter are essentially related to the material wants of society, but he requires in return that we admit the wants of mind to be the immediate object of literature. Geometry contributes to habits of attention, but letters, in multiplying ideas, adorning and polishing them, contribute to the pleasure of society; and after all the mental dignity is the same in regard to both directions of study; for the mind which thinks while seeking the solution of a problem, is not different from the mind which feels while reading the masterpieces of literature. One should never forget, moreover, that as it was literature which, under the influence of faith, delivered Europe from barbarism, so is it still, perhaps, among human things, the best guarantee against a relapse to the savage state†. Such sentiments, however, are not those of all intelligent persons belonging to our reading public now. Indeed, to hear some of them, you might infer that we were threatened with an extinction of all literature; for, say they, "the fundamental art of expressing thought by written symbols remains still imperfect. It seems strange that we do not adopt generally the system of short-hand, which as a method of writing is more in accordance with the activity of mind that now prevails." This, however, is perhaps a strained inference on our part; but then there are "men of

* In Bruto.

† Sur l'Utilité des Belles-Lettres. Hist. de l'Acad. des Inscr. tom. viii. 15.

information" who, as Jules Janin says, would use mind avowedly only for a material and visible purpose, which is one way of nearly getting rid altogether of its supremacy. Of Titian and Raphael they would make two house-painters; of Mozart and Rossini, two drummers; they would employ Corneille to drive an omnibus, and Madame de Sevigné to keep the accounts of a silk-mercer. Is it not true, moreover, that there is a disposition somewhat prevalent among the gravest class of readers to think very slightingly of that kind of writing which follows, though under a Christian banner, in the track of the Tusculans or the dialogues of Plato? The time is past, they say, for all that kind of thing. It is regarded, in fact, as wholly beneath notice, if compared with works of engineering or of military science, travels, statistics, natural philosophy, mathematics, or political economy. Our blue books, not exactly, by the way, what the French called the "bibliothèque blue," have more to do with matter than mind; and, accordingly, in regard to many reading men, earth and clay seem to be every thing, and every thing for earth and clay. Though "there's something in us that reproves our fault, yet such a headstrong potent fault it is, that it but mocks reproof." Now and then, in fact, mind is so disregarded, that, as Richard of St. Victor says, "faults of ignorance we rather deny than lament, and faults of malice we are more accustomed either to boast of with insolence, or to defend with contumacy. Of such persons, whatever may be their scientific proficiency, it is said 'quod lætantur cum malefecerint et exsultant in rebus pessimis*.'" Who among a very large and very influential class of persons seems to care a fillip for penetrating beyond the surface into any questions that involve considerations of internal serenity, questions purely of mind, of the heart, of the soul, of the life to come? They estimate things according to their opinion of the money value, or of the outside; although, as Balzac says, and goodness knows as those who love to go a-shopping might repeat as an experimental certainty, "the judgment respecting the goodness of any thing formed on their simple exteriors, and by their surface colouring, is not always infallible." Things external even, that seem depending for their

* De Statu interioris Hominis, ii. c. 4.

effect upon the material form alone, are nevertheless powerless if viewed apart from the mind that should give them value. "How comes it," asks Schelling, "that to every cultivated sense imitations of the so-named real, carried even to illusion, appear in the highest degree untruthful, even convey the impression of spectres; whereas a work in which the idea is dominant, seizes us with the full force of truth, nay, transports us for the first time into the genuine world of reality? Whence does this arise, save from the more or less obscure perception, which proclaims that the idea is that alone which lives in things, and that all else is beingless and empty shadow?" Perhaps you think this philosophic kind of talk unfit for a party in which young people, and women amongst them, form the chief element: but this is only a silly and unjust fancy of yours. Of course, we are alluding now all the while to the invisible world; but, as Augustin Cochin says in his admirable oration on the subject, women are accustomed to live in the invisible world, and one may therefore speak of it to them. Pity, patriotism, love, art, the ideal, that is what they like, what they seek, what they cultivate and employ. Now all that aggregate belongs to the invisible world. "Where," he asks, "is this world that cannot be seen? You have not far to find it. While hearing these words with attention and favour you are in it. Nothing is truer than what mind takes in, and there are a hundred times more realities in the invisible than in the visible world. Without the former, the latter would become I know not what obscure pell-mell of ephemeral existences, meeting without comprehending or loving each other, as in a battle where enemies kill the unknown—it would be a world uninhabitable and soon uninhabited. Your materialists, opposed to the supremacy of mind, would in fact necessarily banish art, poetry, love, justice, and certainty. Consider a moment the interest of art, of even physical beauty only material. Is it not merely a charming veil thrown by the hand of God over the soul? What do you desire in a picture, in a portrait? It is expression, that is to say, the translation of what is invisible, the physiognomy of interior qualities, what speaks by the look without being eyes, what speaks by the smile without being lips: you want to have represented the inside much more than the outside, and it is the inside

which is beautiful in a work of art. In some picture galleries you may have an immense display of talent, cleverness, dexterity, colour, good drawing, a little of every thing, and yet you may leave the rooms without any emotion, distracted, fatigued; and if you ask yourself on going out, Have I seen what I long to behold, beauty, the sublime ideal of art? you will answer, No! not in a single work of that collection. Then, again, above painting and music, there is eloquence. Words: and are these only a sound passing from lips to ears in causing two organs to vibrate? No; words are the bond between two souls which meet in the invisible world, as lightning is the signal of the meeting of two electricities which are not seen. What is a book or a musical composition—black marks on paper? Nay, a mental exercise, which, as long as the world lasts, will cause every one, rich, poor, ignorant, learned, young, old, man and woman, to exclaim 'how beautiful!' What you admire, then, in all things is the invisible idea far beyond what your senses perceive. It is a ray, and your mind is a mirror; it is an echo, and your mind is a lyre; but this ray and this echo fall from the invisible world; and the chord or the canvas, the eye or the ear, are only delicate instruments which serve for communication between the two worlds, the means of transport to the region where beauty and perfection dwell. Poetry too, like art, belongs to the mind and to the invisible world. If you do not clothe all objects with an unseen poesy, they will be ugly, insignificant, void, colourless, and insupportable*." Yet your materialists, who would overthrow the supremacy of mind, are insensible to those demonstrable truths.

"What a marvellous thing is this," exclaims playfully Richard of St. Victor, taking the instance of men unable to dwell a moment in a mental atmosphere without reference to a material end, "that a body taken wholly from the earth can desert at least for an instant the earth, as in dancing, and rise above itself,"—people really danced in his time, when they set about it,—"while a spirit of an aerial and incorporeal nature cannot, as it were, dance, cannot be separated even for an instant from

* Le Monde Invisible, Discours prononcé devant la Société d'émulation de Bruxelles, Mai, 1864.

corporeal and earthly things! You wonder how a spiritua creature can occupy itself with spiritual things; but ought you not rather wonder that a spirit cannot be separated from things not spiritual*?" By the way, what is truly wonderful, and to be remembered by people engaged in our line, mind enters ever into bodily dexterity. It is the mind quite as much as the limb that triumphs in gymnastic exercises. Not alone in bearing fatigue, as in rowing and riding, but in accomplishing any feat that requires a quick eye and a ready hand, the mind, the will the fixed resolve, is almost every thing.

This is perhaps, however, beside the matter that we have immediately in hand; but to consider what relates to it, and what falls under every one's notice, we must remark that to enjoy a serene hour the mind itself, quite as much as the muscular element, has to be enlisted to serve our purpose; and so accordingly, we find it to be in almost every instance where anything like success attends such projects for spending a happy hour; for delicate, and noble, and lofty thoughts will strike people when gone out for the day to enjoy the summer air:

> "Ah! 'twere a lot too blessed
> For ever in these coloured shades to stray,
> Amid the kisses of the soft south-west,
> To rove and dream for aye;
> And leave the vain low strife
> That makes men mad—the tug for wealth and power,
> The passions and the cares that wither life,
> And waste its little hour."

However, we must back water, or pull the reins, as the case may be, or, as the French say, "return to our sheep," who are not prepared, perhaps, as yet to feed wholly on such elevated pastures as reflections of this kind, standing by themselves, would seem to furnish.

We must, however, in pursuance of our plan, proceed, during our excursion this day, to consider the necessity of paying some tribute to the mental supremacy, if we desire really to enjoy serene hours; the fact being, that such hours are rendered what

* In Ps. 113.

they are in regard to serenity by a certain wonderful and unconscious participation, as the Père Boutauld says, in that wisdom which renders the Creator eternally serene in himself, which, being communicated as a kind of vapour to the passions of men, causes a certain peaceful and divine influence to enter even amidst their corruptions and tumults*; so that men can look back upon these intervals after they are past, and recognize them as a legitimate property, which is not what every one's pastime will admit of; for when Astolfo beheld, among other lost things in the moon, some of his own former hours and deeds, if nobody had been with him to make him aware of them, never would he have consented or even been able to recognize them as having been once really his own. People's serene hours, full of feeling, full of thought, full of hopes, full of wishes and aspirations, full of secret sorrows and resignation that passes utterance perhaps, will one day probably be found to stand this test. But what will it be with other hours, to which many are devoted, without any of these accompaniments excepting under a very materialized form? Will they be able one day to conceive that by any blindness or coarse obduracy on their part it was possible that such hours could really once have been their own? It is not likely.

Though while in the boat we call ourselves hands, as Sam Slick remarks, yet when we land on the island, or on the sunny bank, it must be found that we have heads also, and such, too, as will justify no one for saying of our talk "verborum flumen, mentis guttam," or for fancying, as Drummond of Hawthornden says,

"Ut non possimus de magnis thinkere rebus."

Each is no doubt a fine fellow and handsome too; but, as some one says in the old play, "I must have him wise, as well as proper. He comes not in my books else." The young man we light upon must for learning and behaviour be fitted for our turn—well read in poetry and other books—good ones, I warrant you. It will be well if he resemble Joinville in regard to the quality which endeared him to the king, St. Louis, who loved

* Les Conseils de la Sagesse, 99.

his company, "à cause du subtil sens qu'il connoissoit en lui.' In fact, though three realms do not obey us, our haunts on these occasions are often in gardens, where, like "great Anna" herself,

"We sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea;"

They constitute a medium highly favourable to the acoustic o ideas, to the joys and digressions of mind; for ours are what Pope commends, and attributes to the happy,

"Successive study, exercise, and ease."

And, besides, there is, as Vauvenargues remarks, even in this passion for bodily exercise, a pleasure as well as an assistance not alone for the senses, but also for the mind, since while the senses are delighted to act, while we row, run, leap, and swim the mind enjoys the justice of the senses, and the adaptations of the body. Ours are, moreover, actually the sequestered scenes that inspire mind. Be you ever so little content with having St. Anne's Hill for your Parnassus,

"Poetic fields encompass us around,
And still we seem to tread on classic ground.
Here his first lays majestic Denham sung;
There the last numbers flow'd from Cowley's tongue."

Not to speak of our suburban harbours of refuge, sung by Ben Jonson, such as Kilburn, Hammersmith, St. John's-wood, Hampstead, Highgate, all associated by him with pleasant memories as where he says, "Let's back to Kentish-town and there make merry,"—without, I say, including these places, the immediate banks of the Thames abound with spots of poetic and historic interest, which speak to mind and intelligence, and which to be enjoyed require their exercise. To ascend no higher than Chelsea, there, looking at the site of the north end of what is now called Beaufort-row, you have the sweet domestic and yet glorious picture of Sir Thomas More. Erasmus, who had been in his house there, calls it a home of the Muses and another Academy of Plato. There was neither man nor woman who was not employed in it in literary discipline and fruitful reading, although the principal study was religion. All were employed, all cheer-

ful. Nor was there wanting mirth; and all maintained by gentleness and kindness. Who can pass by this suburb now and not think of "his right faire house, his libraire, his galleries, his garden, his orchard, and all other necessaries, so handsome about him; his eight watermen and his great barge?" Here he is described walking with his son-in-law Roper along the Thames' side, talking of the events of the times. To this sunny shore he is described returning often from London, "taking his boate towarde his house, wherein by the waie he was verie merrie." From here he departed for the Lords at Lambeth, for the Tower and the scaffold, "suffering none of his family to follow him forth of the gate to the water's edge, but pulling the wickett after him, and shutting them all from him, and with a heavie heart, as by his countenance it appeared, taking boat with Roper and four servants towards Lambeth." So you see how mind is called into play from the first after leaving Whitehall Stairs. Then higher up the river you are actually invited to pursue a very ancient line of religious thought and practice, by the lines of Collins, in his ode on Thomson's death,

> "Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore,
> When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
> And oft suspend the dashing oar,
> To bid thy gentle spirit rest."

However, even if it had been otherwise with us, whatever men of materialized natures may choose to insinuate, it is pretty clear that mental pleasures enter largely into the composition of all human enjoyment, every day exemplifying that indestructible serenity which a habit of exercising the intelligence gives to certain privileged beings. "Where there is a just coincidence of external and internal action," as Coleridge says, "pleasure is always the result; but where the latter is deficient, realities will seem cold and unmoving." Cicero, with a sort of indignation, demands, "When you seek a pretty spot,—'locus amœnus,'—in a beautiful villa, do you refer the pleasure to the body*?" You see, when asking this question, he does not even require that the spot should recall a friend, which circum-

* De Fin.

stance, nevertheless, connected with the force of mind, often constitutes its chief charm; for, as Montesquieu says, "we are all full of accessory ideas;" nor does the Roman suppose present a more direct ally, namely, the consciousness of that connexion between a book and the precise spot in which you read it, which association, however, is so remarkable and well known. For somebody's part he seldom revisits a river's bank, or the edge of a particular field, or the stone seat at the skirt of the grove, or the palisade against which he leant, or even the bench of the park in the capital, without being reminded, to say nothing of faces, of some book that he read there perhaps many years ago; while with a kind of reciprocal service the book, still to be silent as to countenances, brings before his eyes, with as much freshness as when he once saw the reality, a smiling landscape, or some pleasing objects, that for the time were associated with it, and which he saw without seeing them while intent upon the book, and on feeling the charm of a serene hour. What is still more remarkable, though perhaps it is true of every one else, the same speaker might tell you in moments of confidence, that the pleasures arising from locality, even as long as he can remember, seem to result from a series of pictures constantly succeeding one another, made up of reminiscences of happy hours or perhaps moments, of beautiful places, of charming friends, of romantic tales, or of fancies that passed like lightning, and of a thousand impressions resulting from circumstances and places, which, by a strange inexplicable mystery, are constantly being suggested afresh by sites and things of present daily occurrence; and that without such an association of ideas the present spot, as it really exists, and apart from the charms which affection for another may impart to it, never occupies his thoughts for one instant, while thus receiving, as it were, wholly through mind, daily and hourly visits from what has ever affected him like enchantment since his childhood.

Our thoughtless people, as some please to call them, are often, in a way of their own, thinkers, practically not falling short even of the Peripatetics, who, as Cicero says, "preferred, with a certain infinite praise, the soul to the body, and the virtues of the mind to those of the body." I am not prepared to say that each of our excursionists, like the Deipnosophists of old, has to

bring to the discussions that ensue in our boat, or during our pedestrian or equestrian ramble, "some contribution of quotation from books*," for we have no such people amongst us as could be called either fishing, eating, riding, or river sophists. We are seldom, it is true, favoured like the Argonauts, who had Orpheus himself embarked with them. But still, in point of fact, seldom does a boat with a good crew leave Chelsea or Putney without having on board some "arbiter eruditæ voluptatis," some dispenser of mental pleasure; seldom does a Kew or Richmond skiff once more dance along the tide, through reeds, through waves skirting the grassy islet, without there being a sort of philosophic talk by fits and starts, a little sanctimonious, too, let me tell you, sometimes; for, as one of the ancients said, "neither are they who like pleasure found to be void of contemplation, nor are those who serve contemplation left without pleasure; so that," as he truly concludes, "contemplation is pleasing to all†." But what do they contemplate? A thousand things, as Caxton replies, bright young hearts, eloquent young tongues. O summer evenings on the Thames! O youth, youth! Try for ten minutes to converse with people who are without any intellectual or moral value, and you will discover the absolute necessity of which I am now speaking. In fact, to a companion without mind, without what may be called a quick graceful mind, a mind more or less exercising its supremacy, and called into action each moment by the presence of little common humble things—what is the Thames, or the bank of forget-me-nots, or the swan, or the plot of green grass, or the wayside arbour, or yourself, or any human being, or any of the items in your bill of fare, when you invite others to go out along with you for the day? Chrysippus wanted to alter the lines on the tomb of Sardanapalus. He would have made them thus:—

> "Knowing that thou art mortal, feed thy soul
> On wise discourse. Nothing lasts from eating.
> But what I thought, and learnt, and heard of wisdom,
> Is all I now have left‡."

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* Athen. lib. vii.

† Sen. de Otio Sapientis.

‡ Athen. lib. viii.

The lady whose travels into Spain are so curious, speaking of the Casa del Campo at Madrid, which is a vast garden on the banks of the Manzanares, where is a statue of Philip IV., and a lake surrounded with great oaks, a place rather neglected and but little frequented, says that "many people, however, go there to think," and choose it to walk in for that purpose. But let us return from Manzanares to the Thames, which at no season can be mistaken like that Spanish river for a brook. It is here, too, no exaggeration to maintain, that people who make expeditions of this kind must be thinkers if they would thoroughly enjoy themselves, or continue long to row with satisfaction, watching the blue water as it yields to their bending oar—I was going to add, if they are to row even with power and effect, the fact being that bodily exertion is never so pleasing as when you are strongly impelled by some idea or sentiment. They must prey like swallows on invisible food, pursuing flies or nothing. If they are readers, they must be lovers of our great literary masterpieces; they must, as Jules Janin says, honour noble minds; and if they are without letters, they must remain faithful to mental liberty, and recognize at least by a smile good thoughts and good examples. They must have a practical if not a conscious sense of what they owe to mind, even as the best lawgiver. "The law of the devil," says Richard of St. Victor, "is ignominious, the law of the flesh contemptible, the law of the mind laudable. I call the law of the flesh dangerous," he adds, with a dash of humanity that does not weaken the force of his conclusion, "on this account, because, by little and little enervating the mind, it prepares the way for the law of the devil*." Now, without being metaphysicians, our merry excursionists must be willing to submit to the rules which mind, inaudibly, lays down for the conduct of a serene hour. We have not escaped from all jurisdiction when we threw up our heels and started for the day. "There must be rules," as Balzac says, "for every thing, for boating and driving, and serving as a guide. I have seen," he adds, "rules for a porter and gatekeeper, though such an office does not seem very difficult." Xenophon, in his Œconomics, says, "Why is it that rowers are

* In Ps. 118.

not troublesome to one another, except because they sit in regular order, and have rules for bending forward and leaning back in order?" Do you ask, then, what are the rules for serene hours laid down by mind? Look at countries where the public opinion, in spite of recent and portentous revolts, retains traces of having been formed from very ancient times to recognize the danger arising from the exclusive or undue influence of the body, that is, from admitting the awkward preliminaries that Richard of St. Victor speaks of, which are producing such grave political and social events in our times. You see the rules in the kind of intellectual treatment provided more or less for every one, which might be compared to that of a gardener for his choicest plants. "Come to visit me," they seem to say, with a celebrated author to a young friend, "and we will put your mind under cover in a hot-house, and all will go on well." In fact, we can collect what is requisite, merely by observing the particular food and embellishment supplied to all persons and all classes there. You have noble pictures accessible to every one, without having to write a polite letter, books without end, that form topics of conversation with lively people, men of literature held in honour by the great, and received into the first circles, not left to sit solitary in some small suburban cottage to astonish some one of youthful enthusiasm who drops in, and knows not which most to admire, their incomparable contentment or their abandonment by the high world. There you have public gardens—music in the open air, beautiful buildings, solemn churches—eloquence employed in the service of mind and of religion, cheerful houses, of which even the construction and arrangement seem to indicate sunny thoughts. You see, in fact, "much that might be traced logically enough to the mental temper of a people like that of Florence in those ancient times when the quarter of Santa Maria Novella received its title of the 'joyful quarter' from the rejoicings of the multitude at getting a new picture into their church*." But turn to a people, however illustrious for science and the employment of material means, where the supremacy of pure mind has been long politically and practically overthrown, or systematically invaded

* Ruskin.

under some pretence or other; and, excepting in few cases here and there where there may be an attempt making to restore it by men who really love the people, you will find an atmosphere of cold gloom that is chilling even to the animal spirits, nothing honoured that addresses itself to spiritual wants without reference to governmental and material interests, though after pure mental greatness has passed away it may have its funeral eulogy in a leading article. You are told of the existence of shut up, reserved treasures of the intellectual order, in the possession of a few who keep them as part of their state and distinction, while for the mass you have only sensuality in every form, though deadened and dispirited by its isolation. The result of visiting the former countries, with all their faults, which no one of sense cares to deny, might be expressed in the words of an old play,

> "——— You have taught me
> To be in love with noble thoughts;"

while that of long confinement to the latter, with all its virtues, which it would be worse than folly to depreciate, might be, "You have taught me to disrelish or forget them." Alas! it is even so. As Fontanes said, "We are surrounded on earth with many mental charms, letters, art, nature. What sources of serene enjoyment if we could realize the definition of M. du Bucq, who said that happiness consisted in taking an interest in the calm! if we could only take an interest in all these serene and beautiful things! But we dissipate and forfeit all that through our passion for the tempest which causes us to forget or make light of them." Nevertheless, the fact is, that "the mind is the first beauty which true love aspires to." Yes, and what's more, though it is not yet time for us to suggest it, even on our rambles, and in our garden bowers, we aspire after truth. Here it is sufficient to say that we want what Chæremon ascribes to such intervals, "laughter, and wisdom, and prudence, and, as far as thoughts are derived from it (or in harmony with it), learning*"—that we want persons who at least, unlike that

* Athen. ii.

"———— red-hair'd youth
Fonder of purl and skittle-grounds than truth,"

will never consciously betray truth through self-interest, or prefer victory unfairly gained in a discussion to what it requires, even though that step should prove, as its adversaries will sometimes say, a bad job for him. Obviously, indeed, for a million of reasons, your serene hour requires a person who can say with Richard, "paratior sum a veritate vinci quam sophistice vincere et contentiose agere *."

This recognition of the supremacy of mind, and of the requisite subordination to it of what is material, historically considered has always belonged, in some degree, to those who with any degree of heart were devoted, under any form, to the kind of enjoyment we are recommending. "Let us not always sport or toil, or eat and drink," says even Antiphanes, as if prescribing what should be done on a holiday;

"———— but let some reason and discussion
Come in between, and some short pretty songs;
Let some sweet strophes sound. There is no work
In which some variation is not pleasant †."

Not, however, to refer to those ancient times, against which so many just objections can be always made, we find that in the highest period of politeness in England, which is said to have been during the peaceable part of Charles the First's reign, though the intellectual condition of people was not then in a very perfect or comfortable state, the delights of mind were recognized as essential to all social pleasures; for then, we are told, several ladies, celebrated by the poets of that age, used to have assemblies, where persons of the best understanding, and of both sexes, met to pass the evenings in discoursing upon whatever agreeable subjects were started. "Poetry and romance may have been dominant, but," continues Swift, "I conceive their refinements, though we are apt to ridicule them, were founded upon reason." They constituted, moreover, neutral ground, when higher paths, as at that epoch, were beset with danger. As an interesting picture of the mode in which even

* De Emmanuele, ii. 1. † Athen. x.

many country gentlemen of that day enjoyed themselves, we find antiquarians citing a letter of the date of 1639, in which Sir Roger Twysden, inviting Sir Edward Dering to Roydon Hall, says to him, "Wee shall spend the tyme in reading, walking, or somewhat else that will beguile it*." Witness, again, in times less troubled by intellectual marauders, the evenings of Chantilly, when the Princess de Condé was there. They used to walk and saunter along the banks of the lakes, in the alleys of the garden or park, on the terrace, or on the lawn, alone or in troops, as each person's humour suggested, while others sung or recited verses, or read books on balconies, or stretched themselves musingly upon the grass. "Never," continues Cousin, "was seen so lovely a place filled with more agreeable company†." How many persons, again, above all, during the middle ages, associated the love of mind and truth with the beauties of nature, and in the highest sense with serene hours! Such intervals, indeed, can hardly be thought on without recalling those who sought them under that influence of faith which is the highest act of mental authority. Here we are transported at once to the old monastic gardens, cloisters, meadows, and alcoves. Take but one example. After the death of Theodoric, when all was lost for the Goths in Italy, Cassiodorus retired from the world thus. "To be sure," as a great French author says, "the sacrifice at such a time was not great, and Cassiodorus besides had wherewithal to make it sweet. He was learned; he was rich. A few domains which he possessed in Calabria, on the sea-shore, in an admirable situation, were enclosed with walls and converted into a studious and religious solitude. Here he assembled monks and books. Here his days passed in the exercises of piety and science. He employed his companions, above all, in copying manuscripts. He read, he studied, he made clocks." "I confess," concludes M. de Sacy, "I cannot but form to myself a delicious idea of this life of peace in the midst of the confusion and disorders which then reigned in the world."

However, as we are on the Thames now, with no barbarians

* Archæolog. Cantiana, 62.

† Madame de Longueville.

to fear, and the Goths rather triumphant, we ought not to be unreasonable, proposing such examples as the latter to the tribe of our poor English ramblers when they go forth by pairs or with many for a little mirth upon a holiday; and yet it is but fair and honest to suggest the necessity of their having some degree of taste and aptitude for what belongs to the monarchy of mind, namely, letters, or at least for thoughts worthy of them, which often are found in the illiterate, in order to reap the true benefit of such intervals, a qualification denied, in fact, to no class of the population, though of course varying greatly in degree and the mode of expression according to the opportunities of those possessing it.

Not to have "the sense of literature, which the simplest and commonest people of the sprightly herd can enjoy, was, according to the ancients," as Sainte-Beuve remarks, "the same thing as not to have the sense of virtue, of grace, of beauty, in a word, of all that is divine, and consequently serene upon earth."

That mental culture which Cicero regarded "quasi quidem humanitatis cibus*," enters, in fact, almost of necessity into every idea that one can form of serene enjoyment, and whatever the enemies of letters, and of thoughts responsive to them, may assume, it supplies not a useless succour to all the loving affections, to magnanimity, generosity, and that amenity of character which form the mind that endears men to others and qualifies them to impart and receive the pleasure of good fellowship.

There are parties every summer's day even on the Thames, and amidst the groves and gardens that line its banks, composed of persons seeking recreation, who might represent in some degree or other,—if one could say it without pedantry, beyond the degree we always claim for ourselves as a matter of right,—Scipio and Lælius, Cicero and Varro, Tacitus and Pliny. The latter, it is true, carried his passion for study rather further than our juveniles would like to follow him. He had his note-book, musing and writing even when he watched the nets with hunters. "Believe me," he says to Tacitus, "this manner of studying is not to be despised; you cannot conceive how greatly exercise contributes to enliven the imagination. There

* De Fin. iv.

is, besides, something in the solemnity of the venerable woods with which one is surrounded, with that profound silence, that strongly inclines the mind to meditation. Let me advise you henceforth, whenever you hunt, to take along with you your pencil and tablets, as well as your basket and bottle; for be assured you will find Minerva as fond of traversing the hills as Diana." "How is my friend employed?" he asks, writing to Caninius. "Does he unite study with the pleasures of the fields? The solemnity of these woods will dispose your mind to contemplation." He says that his uncle, the naturalist, would frequently in the summer season, if disengaged from business, repose himself in the sun; during which time some author was read to him from which he made extracts. Notwithstanding our late rather impertinent insinuation against people of the present day, the alliance between a taste for reading or reflection, and a desire of serene hours, has continued uninterruptedly to this hour; so that not without singular propriety do we find, as in our Crystal Palace and its pleasure-grounds, the statues of men devoted to letters and philosophy in the gardens to which all ages and both sexes resort to spend their time agreeably. Veta, the celebrated sculptor, is now employed, we are told, in making a statue of Rosmini, the metaphysician and theologian, for a "giardinetto publico." And rightly; for, as a great author says, "the best place for study is the most beautiful; a field or garden, or the bank of a river, are worth all the schoolrooms in Christendom, when once you are past the multiplication table." What serene hours are enjoyed age after age by men who resemble Suger in his leisure moments, combining the delights of thought in the groves and gardens with the perusal of the great authors of all times—Cicero, and Virgil, and Horace,—which last, by the way, that good abbot, who was by no means addicted to paganism, knew by heart. Nor is it passing beyond our limits to make mention, again and again, of such men, and of their thoughts and writings; for, as M. de Sacy says, "how many admirable, though now-a-days neglected books attest the variety and exhaustless fecundity of the religious affections; these books also are romances, that is, the history of a passion, but romances which throw a great light on the most obscure corners of the human heart, and on the most

delicate problems of morality. What other passions can boast of having a more serene motive, one more elevated, more universal, more worthy of man*?" It is a great mistake to set down all our votaries of recreation on the Thames, or through our meadows, as so many illiterate people. You would find amongst them every now and then some modicum of wit or other to shame your square caps from the university; and among older ones, those to meet them in a gentlemanly way on their own ground. Balzac relates an amusing anecdote that may be taken for an instance, at least, in point. "The Mareschal de Biron," he says, who all mareschal that he was may represent here the sort of person that is supposed to have not much to do with books, "being one day with the king in a gallery where was a Greek inscription, and the king having asked some masters of requests to translate it for him, which they were unable to do, the mareschal threw them the sense of it over his shoulder, and passed on, being ashamed to know more than such grave personages." As far, at least, as is implied in a repartee to shame pretensions, this is just what our bow oar, or our cornet-player, for we have most times with us some proper young bachelor of music, or even our fair one presiding, in a party on the heath, would do if there was an occasion, and should any foolish stranger venture to make a jest of any of the party, without considering, as the Florentine says, that the greatest part of such scholars, whether male or female, have the devil, as they say, in a string. And there is another instance, too, amusing enough, that might be cited to indicate their unexpected capacities in this way. What can be more comic or to the point than the scene where the Duc de Saint-Simon received a deputation from the chapter at Toledo, and replied to it? The same thing in respect to our subject, only in another form, might happen any day in the Eton meadows, if we fell in with a party of King's scholars who were disposed to draw us out a little. But let us hear the duke relate it, observing, of course, that to find the likeness, all the Spanish stateliness of the scene with all the low bows must be omitted in order to make room for other accompaniments that may be imagined of a more English cha-

* Variétés littéraires.

racter. "The two canons, then," he says, "accompanied by several young people, nephews and dependents of the archbishop having addressed me in Latin, I was at my wit's end, while they were holding forth, to know how I should ever be able to answer them, as they did not know French. They made me a low reverence in concluding, and I saw, at the same time, all this youth looking at me, and nudging one another, and inwardly chuckling at the embarrassment in which it very justly believed that I felt myself. However, I had listened with all my ears, and I plunged at once into my answer in Latin, first casting a look at all that youth, which seemed somewhat astonished at my effrontery, which it did not reckon on exactly. Oh I went unrolling my Latin as I could, in which, no doubt, there was a good deal of the kitchen! but I dashed forward answering point after point, praising and thanking them, and saying the most complimentary things I could think of, and what I deemed very important, speaking quite as long as my orator, to whom then made the same low reverence that he made me, casting another look at the company of youth, which seemed to me to be 'tout éplapourdie,' quite thrown back at my having acquitted myself so well. We all then rose, and the young fellows congratulated me on my eloquence in Latin. That was not exactly I think, what they believed it to be, nor, indeed, what I myself thought it, for that matter; but, in fine, I had got out of the scrape, and was safe, which was more than either they or I anticipated*." But to return to our own more homely liabilities, incidents, and examples.

One has only to hear M. de Sacy speaking of serene hours to feel how natural is every where this alliance which I am pointing out between them and some degree of mental enjoyment: "What charming mornings and evenings," he exclaims, "that one passes under a clear sun in some shady walk, reading Racine or Bossuet! What a delight not to feel oneself interrupted by the business that calls you home, not to have in mind the importunate idea of some rendezvous which will be so exact to the hour—to have only books or a friend and that absolute repose which is as sweet as the sentiment of

* Mém., tom. xix. 217.

good conscience!" Speaking of such charming volumes, a recent commentator tells us how he enjoyed them during the month of June, having them with him every afternoon as he strayed under the poplars, elms, and willows which shade the banks of the Rhone, where the whole works of the Creator seemed to serve as a frame to these admirable works of his creature*. We have pictures of the same kind in our old plays, as where Frederick, fresh in his juvenile innocence from college, has to defend himself against the sneers of his own relations, saying,

> "——————— Though my clothes
> Smell of the lamp, my coat is honourable.
> ——————— I never knew
> More sweet and happy hours than I employ'd
> Upon my books. I heard
> A part of my philosophy, and was so
> Delighted with the harmony of nature,
> I could have wasted my whole life upon it."

Some one else, too, if such allusion could be permitted, might have described from memory many a serene hour passed with French youths in the gardens of the Luxembourg, or of the French king, after visiting on the wings of the old chivalry and romance, and even mediæval learning snapped up in a childish way, those booksellers described by M. de Sacy, inhabiting the narrow picturesque streets of the Latin country, where, in so many sunny, vine-clad courts, and up so many antique turrets, and within so many homes of almost cloistral seclusion, reigned still, or might be thought to reign, the manners and habits of the "ménagier de Paris," or of the middle classes in the days of St. Louis. With what enthusiasm used he to stride along those intricate alleys from the quay of St. Augustine to the street of straw, immortalized by Dante, in which whole quarter every house, as if aware of its near impending destiny, seemed to be calling for Prout to come before it was too late and copy it,—streets that at that time at least seemed, and in many instances with truth, to preserve, as in a last asylum, the homely ways and serene thoughts of poetic and scholastic times, where

* Pontmartin, Causeries du Samedi.

one house had its store of knightly romances, so costly and
curious, another its books, in binding emblazoned with the arr
of noble owners, of falconry and hunting, another its monas
philosophers and poets, in solid boards with clasps of iro
another its venerable vellum-bound chronicles, another its wor
of forest literature, treating on the woods, and then hasteni
with his lately-discovered treasures, which he was sure wou
prove of such additional value when carried to England a
read years after, in his chateau d'Espagne, for when he had
house it should be decked with them,—how would he reali
meanwhile under the groves of the adjacent gardens what
de Sacy describes as the liveliest of his own enjoyment
"When the weather grows fine, does not," he says, "the ve
clearness of the air, the brightness of the sky, and the smili
aspect of all things open our heart to poetry, to eloquence, a
to the wonders of the ideal world? Where can we read so w
as in the open air?" And then the freedom of such eveni
should you be only rowing in your wherry alone or with h
one companion, and having within reach at least your cherish
volume! Elsewhere, or in the house, it would be the dinn
bell, perhaps, that must be attended to, as if, forsooth, you cou
ever think of breakfast or dinner with such a feast in a corn
"Keep a good student from his book," says Shallow, "and it
wonderful." But, no; they can't catch you now; you ha
gone up the river,—you are in the garden, or on the islan
under the willow at the end of the lawn; but the gardener
rolling the walk, or the boys are paddling in the water. Wh
a noise! how can you read? Well, shove off, the boat is in t
stream again, till you float among the water-lilies, or get stopp
in the green rushes; and there, with the swan for addition
your company, you begin to taste what it is to read a favouri
author with the spirit and mind of the charming guide who h
so well described some of the lesser joys of life.

But though a susceptibility for such pleasures is of use
our expeditions, it is not so much all this while a taste for a
particular books that is wanting to constitute a character eligib
for our general purpose, as it is that predominance of mind ov
matter, which, among other results, entails what some mig
think an inconvenience at least, if not an evil, namely, the

pacity for receiving and entertaining what, for want of a better name, are called wild and romantic impressions, though not exactly carried to the length of a wish to consult the wise woman of Brentford, or a belief in Herne the hunter walking round the oak at midnight in Windsor Forest, blasting the tree, and shaking a chain in a most hideous manner, as the old tale goes. But you see, the fact is, that this practical sense of the potency of mind is very apt to impart to people a little tincture of something that looks rather like superstition, existing as that sense does so often without any literary habits to embellish it, or scientific culture to invent for it another title. Be that as it may, we must expect to find all our good fellows to be somewhat exposed to the sneers of that vast liberal party whose general ideas on such matters resemble those of a late very illustrious commentator on Johnson, who complains that "if any childish prejudice, such as would excite laughter in a well-managed nursery, came across him, he was smitten as if by enchantment." We must expect to find our people inapt to join in the laughter of such well-informed men; theirs had probably been a different kind of nursery, and no doubt a shockingly ill-managed one according to the new theory; so we must reckon on finding them behind the age, a little childish in that way now and then, still a little romantic and foolish, even to such a degree that while rowing at the edge of the barge-stream you may hear of their keeping a look out for the haunted house, or for something that bears a resemblance to it. Of course it won't be a raw gross impression, but it will be such as the gracious pen of Perrault took note of when he makes the child say to his mother, when listening to her little story, "It ain't true, is it? But go on with it, pray." And that of the other, who waits impatiently, and with a little fear, to know what will come down the chimney on the night of St. Nicholas, or what will be found in the tiny shoes on Christmas morning, saying, "I know well enough that it is mamma who puts it there, but all the same, 'mais c'est égal.'" "He begins to boast, you see, already, the little philosopher," remarks Sainte-Beuve, "though for all that he is not very sure that it is his mamma*." Well, this is exactly the

* Nouveaux Lundi, i.

psychological condition of our kids. Their own reasonings ar not exclusively and absolutely accredited by themselves. W must make up our minds, therefore, to this consequence, whic after all, perhaps, is on no grounds to be very much lamente or wondered at; for come now, my good confirmed talkativ philosopher, have you forgotten all the strange things on th subject, opposed to your perspicuities, that have dropped fro profound thinkers,—from men of long varied experience,—fro practical, and even from scientific, men? For instance, grapple with you even on the subject of the haunted hous with all its old furniture, of which each article has its histor and if it could speak there would be much to learn from it, some one suggests,—to meet you, I say, on this very groun the wise old uncle of the illustrious general who has confided t us the memorials of his life and travels*, observes, "that as vessel once containing an odorific substance like amber or mus would preserve that fragrance for years, in spite of all efforts t get rid of it, indicating by that tenacity the extreme divisibili of matter; so a power infinitely superior to that of matter,—th power of a thought of a noble or of a guilty action,—can leav traces behind it that are indelible, a sort of mysterious atmos phere of which no time can destroy the influence." Conscious thus of the prerogative of mind, why should we wonder a people being disposed to believe with him that around eac idea and each moral act there may be really created a sort o occult medium, of which we cannot trace the nature or th limits? Yet this supposition alone opens to us the world o romance with all its high pleasures, and, in spite of what it vastly well-informed disparagers affirm, with all its ennoblin and preserving influences. That there is a certain spiritua world around us no one with a few grains of intelligence ca absolutely deny; the intellect proclaims that there is such world, though as for its manifestations the question of course i an open one. If the mental supremacy be questioned or over thrown, there is an end, no doubt, of all this belief at once; bu in such a condition, with no higher principles to counteract it

* Michel de Yermoloff, Mélanges et Souvenirs d'Histoire de Voyage et de Littérature, 275.

the intelligence lies, as it were, prostrate on the earth, absorbed in mean interests, in the ignoble struggle between narrow and egotistic passions;—you chase away all noble images by introducing a steam-engine, and put to flight all elevated thoughts by an article on a new organization of railroads; you get rid, I grant, of superstition, at least in the old forms; you disenchant the house by means of your machinery; but you often become the joyless slave of more fatal errors, and lose the exalted consciousness of the dignity of your soul.

But, taking a lower and more common point of view, it must never be forgotten that the imagination and poetry, in the ordinary sense, play a great part in the constitution of serene hours for all classes, though the service may not be always recognized or acknowledged. Sad as human life often proves to be, it is seldom when we are unable to possess, as Leigh Hunt says, "either real or ideal elegancies in peace, but must have our fairy palaces crushed by the rude heels of necessity." How the heart revels, how the mind soars aloft, and flies here and there, while the body consorts with all the necessities arising out of an obscure condition and very slender means! What class that cares for any thing gracious in any form that has not its book or its song of the season to talk about? The pavement of London is not, as Pontmartin says of the Parisian, "little favourable to the acclimatization of idyls." Does not that juvenile with his penny tin flageolet, or without it, whistling as he walks, owe so much to fancy and ideality that if he had knowledge or expression sufficient he would sing as he paces along with such strides the very words of the poet, saying,

> "Musis amicus, tristitiam et metus
> Tradam protervis in mare Creticum
> Portare ventis?"

"Does not the mind," says Richard of St. Victor approvingly, "by imagination daily, whenever it wishes, create a new heaven and a new earth? and in that fantastic world, as if a kind of other creator, does it not form and animate such creatures as it likes*?" You have an instance of the fact in Rokeby:—

* Benjamin Major, iii. c. 21.

"For Wilfrid, docile, soft, and mild,
Was Fancy's spoil'd and wayward child;
In her bright car she bade him ride,
With one fair form to grace his side.
Or, in some poor and lone retreat,
Flung her high spells around his seat,
Bathed in her dews his languid head,
Her fairy mantle o'er him spread,
For him her opiates gave to flow,
Which he who tastes can ne'er forego,
And placed him in her circle, free
From every stern reality,
Till to the visionary seem
His day-dreams truth, and truth a dream."

But, returning to the most common of mortals. Let me ask, does not each person actually make the book that he reads, the picture that he looks at, "and, above all," adds Mme. Swetchine, "the atmosphere that he breathes*." "Youth, above all," as Sophocles says, "is pastured in vales of its own making; and neither does the heat of heaven, nor showers, nor any gale disturb it; but it builds up in its mind, and by the aid of imagination, a life of serene enjoyment." Mind obviously is needful to give duration to the pleasures that we excursionists are seeking after, and therefore the poet cries,

"O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use;
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming."

It is no less required for constituting your pleasure at the time when it is at the full. When you row a skiff along an indented or winding shore, how greatly is your enjoyment enhanced by fancying,—even when on the Thames, where Spenser found rocks that "roared as they were rent,"—each stone that juts out some blue promontory, "with trees upon't that nod unto the world," and each little recess of the shore a harbour of refuge, and each bank of bulrushes a sort of primeval forest or a "wasteness wide," through which you love to listen to the faint sounds of

* Lett. i. 166.

rustling birds at sunset! These are slight things; but I speak to those who go out courting the serene, and on whom nothing is thrown away. Let your critics lay down what laws they please, they must mix up reality with the ideal, and the ideal with reality, if they would partake of our kind of amusement. It is not, indeed, necessary on such occasions to invoke odes of that style which Dion Halicarnassus calls Μεγαλοφυὲς καὶ ἡδὺ μετὰ δεινότητος, which he attributes to Alcæus; but the pleasure of seeing sites of beauty is not diminished by hearing, or remembering having heard sung,

> "There's a path by the river all shaded with trees,
> Where people may walk and may talk if they please."

And in favour of more than poesy one ought to accept an excuse which can be sung in lines like these. "A little grain of romance," says a keen and deep observer of mankind, agreeing with our late suggestion, "is no ill ingredient to preserve and exalt the dignity of human nature, without which it is apt to degenerate into every thing that is sordid, vicious, and low." It is better to be, off or on the river or meadow, enchanted with the beauty of forms and natural colours than to stay in golden chambers in town and embrace the dung, like those who keep far enough away from our haunts, of whom it is written, "amplexati sunt stercora*." The least cultivated will often cry with Pumicestone, after hearing talk a comrade more accomplished than himself,

> "What brains some men have!
> I would change all my acres for his poetry."

Moreover, the service is reciprocal, for the development of mind may, no doubt, be traced, as Racine thought, to the enjoyment of serene hours, enabling a generation to excel in arts and sciences, as a result of happy leisure†. Ovid, indeed, expressly asserts it in the line,

> "Carmina proveniunt animo deducta sereno,"

which is a probable opinion; since, as Cowley says, speaking of

* Lam. iv. 5.

† Hist. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. iii. 489.

poetry, "there is nothing that requires so much serenity and cheerfulness of spirit; it must not either be overwhelmed with the cares of life, or overcast with the clouds of melancholy and sorrow; it must, like the halcyon, have fair weather to breed in. The soul must be filled with bright and delightful ideas. In fact, for a man to write well, it is necessary to be in good humour." But even more than all this is true, and we may boldly repeat an observation already made, and affirm that it is the mind which accomplishes and comprises nearly every thing in the way of our enjoyment on the river as elsewhere; for, if you will allow me to play the metaphysician a moment with you, please to observe that when we go out for the day, it is actually in the mental and not in the external world that we live all the while, although the bodies that we animate are living and moving about in another. It is the world of mind, with its groves and rivers, and other beauties too for that matter, that we consort with, feel, admire, and contemplate, while the world that we look at, turning our heads from side to side, is only matter absolutely invisible of itself, and wholly void of all the charms that we admire in looking at it. All these colours, which rejoice us by their variety and vivacity; all these beauties which charm us when we turn our eyes to every object in the scenery that surrounds us; all these delightful sounds in the air, whether caused by musical instruments or by voices, belong to ourselves, and to the world of our mind. Nothing of all this is in the exterior world, or in bodies, or in the air we breathe, for nothing of it is comprised within the idea of matter. Perhaps, unless you have been lately reading Malebranche, these are views that will seem fanciful; but for all that, they are strictly in accordance with positive facts established and demonstrated by science. The truth is, and our gay lively excursionists, perhaps, never feel it so unequivocally as when reclining on the sunny bank listening to a sweet voice and a guitar, man has a lofty mind and a deep heart; and the body, however fair, is in comparison with that mind and that heart, but the pretty painted case of a noble and divine instrument, or even, as the poet calls it, "the muddy vesture of decay which doth grossly close us in." Vauvenargues does not hesitate expressly to affirm that even with lovers, it is the character of the

mind which determines them, that it is the mind which attracts them; and after giving his reasons, so convinced is he of the fact, that he says, "one cannot deny it." What is surprising enough, is to find this opinion maintained and elaborately developed by no less grave a person than John du Rozier, Superior of the Convent of the Minims at the Trinità del Monte at Rome. In his curious work, entitled "The Consolation of Honest People," he shows that the soul being more capable of loving than the body, absence is often the cause of love being increased, and that even the graces of the countenance proceed from mind. "I know not whether I shall be believed," he says, "but I maintain that the thought of a person absent, is often dearer than the presence of the person loved; and at all events, there can be no question but that, provided the absence be not so lengthened as to cause the images received of the mind to become effaced, absence augments love, and no one is a true lover who does not feel his affection augmented by separation from the person loved; which observation proves," he says, "not only that it is mind which attracts, but also that it is mind which enhances the charm of reality." One could not refuse to notice such a passage, coming from so pure and grave a source, though it is only what we ourselves have been remarking over and over again.

But without having any thing to do with lovers, if such a condition be conceivable by us just now, there can be no mistake as to the importance of the part which mind is called upon to play with regard in general to the kind of enjoyment with which we are at present concerned. "The human soul, whenever so little awakened, surpasses," as a French author says, "all that is done externally in its name; and when it is in a state of indifference, in which condition it is otherwise employed than seeking a serene hour, all visible signs of that condition fall very short of representing its somnolescence, the reason being that the inaction of the understanding, of the heart, and of the imagination, is far otherwise destructive and desolating than that of the physical faculties." But when awake we seldom entertain much doubt respecting the spiritual supremacy or the wonders it can achieve. As Marlowe says, there will always hover in our restless heads a thought, a grace, a wonder,

"Which into words no virtue can digest."

"Oh, strange human heart!" cries an illustrious author; "no epic ever written achieves the sublime and beautiful which are graven, unread by human eye, in thy secret leaves!" Montalto expresses the same thought, saying, as if confronted with your mere scientific people,

"The hearts of men, sir, are not to be measured
With what we reach the stars or fathom seas."

And, accordingly, no tongue can express what passes, flashing like lightning, in the minds of even very common fellows during their serene awakened hours. It has always been so. In accordance with what has just been offered as the result of a personal experience, we must affirm that the present is never our object. We are always occupied with the past or the future. "The past and present," says Pascal, "are our means, but the future alone is our object," or, in other words, we are such vassals to mind that we always and every where aspire to a different happiness from what can be enjoyed in this life. We do not reckon, indeed, upon this fact being every day brought home to our own bosoms and formally acknowledged. We do not expect to find in our suburban haunts, as in the gardens adjoining the walls of Treves, a cabin inhabited by a sort of hermits, as when some of the officers in waiting, while the emperor was in the circus, went one evening to walk in them for pleasure, when one of the party, finding in the cabin a manuscript containing the life of St. Anthony, was converted to the Christian faith. We are not likely to find where we have access to, another St. Augustine walking with his friend Alypius, as in the little garden belonging to their hired house, where, under the fig-tree, the former heard from an adjoining house the words of a child or girl exclaiming, "Tolle Lege," which, as every one knows, determined on the spot his conversion. We may not have every day in our retreats such conversations on the happiness of the future life as were once held at an open window over the garden of the house at Ostia which received St. Augustine and his mother while they were waiting for the hour to embark,—but still there rests in our arbours, or on our

hill-sides, an influence which is proved experimentally to favour a discovery of very suggestive things. Life is then felt, as M. de Sacy says, it is felt in some books, like those in which it seems as if one could tell at what hour of the day, and under what circumstances, each page was written, while the influence of each produces results that are often very deep and lasting, and we may feel that a summer-day could not have been better passed than in yielding to its influence,

> "Upheld by the belief that all pure thought
> Is deathless, perfect *.

Here it is a tender memory which recalls dead or absent friends, there a majestic sadness which mourns for lost affections, supposing them to be ever lost; which is what I do not believe, else would the state of some be desolate; now it is the remembrance of a morning sky, of an evening stroll with some congenial spirit, of hearing music in a garden, or of gliding down a river; then, presently, it will be a wish to live more innocently, to succour the wretched, to sacrifice oneself to the happiness of some one else, as if the true reading of the poet's lines were

> "Patience and abnegation of self, and devotion to others,
> This was the lesson a day of leisure and pleasure had taught him."

Inclination, then, by means of these intervals, is thus added to the knowledge we had at other times of obligation; and this produces in our heart, as the Père Boutauld says, certain delicious emotions which agitate us, and cause even our passions to vibrate in unison with conscience, and to co-operate in the desire of doing, on every possible occasion, what's right, and that is what God wishes †. Duty is now pleasure; obedience, freedom; conformity, our humour. Now is the moment, as in the gardens of Treves and Milan, here in this very spot, before you get back to the respectable representatives of caution, to seize for action, or, if that be not possible, for some resolution and step that you cannot later, at their suggestion, renounce and measure back when the high vision of the heart has passed by. For, indeed,

* David Gray.

† Les Conseils de la Sagesse, 100.

"——— That we would do
We should do when we would; for this would changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents."

"Nothing," as Electra says, "is more detestable than base deliberation;" but I promise you that such won't be held among the tall reeds or in the boat that glides through them, in presence of the fair, and that means the good, for alone the good, or those who are good in the merciful eyes of Heaven, accepting a gush of tears from ours, are fair. No, it will be some generous and magnanimous resolve. Ion, the Chian, therefore prayed, saying,

"Give us, kind God, an age of happiness,
To sport and play, and cherish just designs."

And Amphis, showing the utility of such sweet intervals, said,

"For many causes do I think our life
Best and happier than yours, whose wisdom all
Lies in a stern and solemn-looking brow.
For that slow prudence which is always busy
In settling small affairs, which with minuteness
And vain solicitude keeps hunting trifles,
Fears boldly to advance in things of weight;
But our mind, not too fond of scrutinizing
Th' exact result of every trifling measure,
Is ever for prompt deeds of spirit ready *."

The serene hour is the time of first thoughts, as when Robinson Crusoe, smiling to himself at the sight of the money, said aloud, "O drug!" &c. The next day is the relapse to one's old train, as when "upon second thoughts he took it away, and, wrapping all this in a piece of canvas, passed on †."

"No more with social warmth the bosom burns;
But all th' unfeeling, selfish man returns."

Therefore, upon the whole, I would change a little Pliny's maxim, and say, that we should realize in the busy scenes of

* Athen. x. † Leigh Hunt.

life those resolutions which we form in days of amusement and what seems to others only frolicsome retreat.

After all, trifle as we may, the proof of the necessity of paying homage to mind, with a view to the attainment of serene hours, is contained in the fact that sooner or later it is mind that triumphs; and what peace or enjoyment can there be in opposing an all-present power that is sure in the end, and that ought to conquer? "What is the name of this strange malady?" cries the heroine of a poet, "which gnaws me in the midst of my glory and of my beauty?" "That malady," replies her guide, "is the supreme good, daughter mine, and its name is the soul *." It is mind that carries the day both within and without us; within,—for, not to repeat our former suggestion, that even the beauty of what we see depends upon its influence, it is the mental impression which decides the character of our actions. "Sola enim justa velle, est jam justum esse," says Richard of St. Victor †; and elsewhere he says, as if wishing to encourage some who are not far off, "he who loves in another the good which he has not himself, the Scripture declares that it will be imputed to him as if he had it ‡;" which doctrine, Balzac, who probably never read the canon of St. Victor, applies to himself, saying, "All that is good in me, as far as I know, is that I esteem in another the virtue that I have not myself. I am one of the bad, but I am of the party of the good,—'du partie des gens de bien §.'" Thus potent is mind to determine, in a certain way, the character of whatever is about us, and, what is more important still, the nature and value of our daily actions. What, for instance, is a gift, a favour, without a mental act inspiring it? If you will hear him who expressly treats upon the subject, these things are not what we hold in our hand, or see, or can lose. Favours cannot be fingered; they are in the mind. The external consequence is but a sign or mark of what is mentally existing, "quia beneficium non in eo quod fit aut datur, consistit, sed in ipso dantis aut facientis animo ‖." And, in point of fact, this is nothing but what we all feel to be

* Rédemption, Octave Feuillet.
‡ In Cant. Cantic. xxxiii.
‖ Sen. De Beneficiis, lib. i.
† Benj. Major, iii. 16.
§ Socrate Chrétien, Préface.

true: at least the intensity of our sorrows and our joys is entirely depending on it. Take an example which involves a very common case. If some unforeseen accident, or great bodily pain, were to render you powerless to assist at a distance, as you are expected to do, some friend who cannot be informed of your situation, the idea of your inability, combined with the fear of your being suspected of forgetfulness or indifference, would aggravate to an incalculable degree your suffering, which explains, perhaps, why Providence seems to take such care to provide by giving unexpected resources against that emergency; but if, what is generally the case, before the event you have done what you had promised, the consciousness of that act, and the assurance that your friend will have fresh proof of your affection, changes wholly the nature of your position. Let the paroxysm of bodily pain be what it may, you laugh at it then; you say to yourself that you have nothing to do but to suffer quietly; and so complete is the victory of mind and conscience under these circumstances that, without being in the least a philosopher, the thought of what you have escaped by having already done what was required of you, and of your having thus anticipated your accident, reduces to nothing the suffering resulting from it, and, without its pride, you can almost declare, as if a disciple of the Porch, that physical pain is not an evil. On the other hand, let the mind be the sufferer, let it be imagined for an instant that you have failed your friend, and then Paradise itself would be distasteful, in fact, a scene of misery. "So strangely immaterial are we really," as a great author says,—"we human beings with flesh and blood,—that if you suddenly abstract from us but a single, impalpable, airy thought which our souls have cherished, you seem to curdle the air, to extinguish the sun, to snap every link that connects us to matter, and to benumb every thing into death except woe*."

But we said also that mind triumphs externally without us, in the domain of public thought and of the world. Writing to Balzac, Voiture says, "Those who are jealous of the honour of the country do not inquire more about what does Mons. le Maréchal de Créquy than about what you are doing; and there are

* My Novel.

generals who do not make more noise with thirty thousand men than you make with your pen in solitude." Was not that an instance? How many Roman generals and magnates, whose names never reached these shores even while they lived, of whom no one in their own country cared to hear about a year after their death? whereas, in spite of his faults, the memory of Ovid, known wherever letters were known, still lives even in the name given to a lake by the semi-barbarous population of the Dobroutcha. But what are such details? Look at the Christian Church, always in the estimation of its enemies down and done for. There, during nineteen centuries, you behold in the midst of the world, subjugating the world, "the permanent victory of mind over matter, the intellectual enfranchisement of the human race, and all that the spirit of sacrifice, regulated by faith, adds of grandeur and of beauty, to science, to labour, and to virtue*." France, every one out of it thinks, is the nation of all others most inclined to the passion for military life; that is, for material means, for power and brute force. Is it not remarkable, then, to hear Janin say of his countrymen, when describing the joyful reception given to the Archbishop of Bordeaux at his native village, "Ask any of the crowd passing you in such haste, and they will tell you that they are more proud to be the brothers of an archbishop than of a general in the army†?" What is such a boast but a homage to mind? Observe this divine society in the depth of the middle ages, where you might fancy, perhaps, that feudalism and petty despotisms would contest with success the sublime prerogative of mind. Well, then, you have examples without end to prove the contrary. The first that comes will suffice. Read for instance these words, addressed to a bishop by Henry of Salzburg, as if expressly to proclaim the supremacy that was vainly threatened: "Velint enim, nolint," he says, "omnes reges, universi imperatores, cuncti potentes sæculi, atque omnes accincti gladio"—your election is canonical. The answer would have attested the same victory if it had been a question of righting a woman or espousing the cause of a peasant against his oppressor. Come down to

* Montalembert. † Le Voyage d'un Homme heureux.

modern times, which have heard also, on an occasion somewha similar, this "velint—nolint," to astonish legislatures, and caus an uproar in a whole nation; you have similar facts to attes the victory of mind. Look at the simplest parish priest i Ireland; look at the bishop in England, without a palace, throne, or a penny that he has not received as alms from th charitable; above all, look at the Sovereign Pontiff—look at th example of Pius VII., and hear the comments of M. de Sacy "The sovereign has not a soldier. Rome is open to the firs French corporal who comes to intimate the emperor's orders but the pope is king of all catholic consciences, and has subje at the feet of Napoleon's throne. The man is weak and timi the pontiff is heroic, with only one answer, 'Je ne puis pas.' And then see the result, see how these powers, that are found in mind and conscience, rise up at the moment you thoug them down for ever! 'This old machine will fall to pieces its own accord,' said the General Bonaparte; a little later he ha to say, 'These priests take the soul and leave me the carcas It was the machine of the republic, though not exactly fifte centuries old, that had already fallen to pieces of its own acco 'How am I to treat the pope?' asked M. Cacault before setti out, commissioned by the first consul. 'Treat him,' repli Bonaparte, 'as if he had 200,000 men at his orders.'" What deep practical sense of the supremacy of mind had even th representative of material power and brute force while the ene of sophistical reasoning! "Is it possible," asked Villemai speaking to M. de Narbonne, "that in the head which gover Europe there should be place for our Normal school and for wha passes in it?" "You know little about him," was the answe "The emperor, all powerful and victorious as he is, has only o subject of uneasiness in the world—the people who talk an the people who think; and yet he likes them, or at least fee that he cannot do without them. He wishes, and he has tol me so twenty times, that his reign should be distinguished b great works of mind, great literary works. What flatters hi most is to be called the chief of a great intellectual epoch. ' like the mathematical and physical sciences,' he said to me 'each of them, algebra, chemistry, botany, is a fine partial a

plication of the human mind; but literature is the human mind itself*.'"

But to return to our little amphibious audience, not prepared perhaps at present for such elevated themes. It follows, however, from this glance at them, combined with considerations that were more homely and personal, that in greatest as in least things, it will behove them never to forget the homage which they owe to mind, amidst the enjoyments even of a bright hour on the river, or in a garden, as well as in the gravest occupations of their social, or, if they should be so placed, of their political careers. We may conclude the day with these words of M. de Sacy, who, since writing them, has acted with noble intrepidity in accordance with their spirit: "Honour to those who preserve the worship of mind, and who propagate it among others. It is well to be united at least on this ground. Amidst so many ruins and deceptions, letters or thoughts congenial to them ought to be our refuge and a bond of all elevated characters. It is not every one, of course, who can arrive at great knowledge; but to love letters and noble thoughts is to belong to the great family, it is to be attached to it by a little cord." In fact, the mind to us should in a certain sense be every thing—not alone a kingdom, as is said in the old ballad, but also a holiday, a bower, a boat on the river, for, as Marcus Antoninus remarks, while many in vain are wishing themselves at such and such a spot for recreation and refreshment, you have it in your power by means of the mind at all times to enjoy what you may have set your heart on; to have at your side flowery banks, and running streams, and quiet groves, and a congenial companion, and moments of serenity which want no element, at least of that higher peace, for the full enjoyment of which we were no doubt created.

Thus did our excursionists talk together while sauntering through the meadows, or stretched upon the grass-plot, or letting their boat float down the stream. But now the shades of evening warn them to resume their oars and to return home, for, as Homer says, they must "yield obedience to the black night;" and they need no wag either to remind them of this necessity

* Souvenirs Contemporains, tom. i. 147.

by demanding "Is the maternal authority aware of their absenc from the domicile?" for so runs the phrase now, which a fe years ago, as we all remember, was shorter and more homely but we in England improve every day. It is time, at all event for their bodies to be in doors, since as for Cynthia, look yo already risen, whose fair face might make you wish, perhaps, t stay out longer, she, you know, as Spenser says,

"——— never sleeps,
But walks about high heaven all the night."

Nice companions, too, she has later, if you were silly enough t stay out with her to join them.

"The owl is abroad, the bat and the toad,
And so is the cat-a-mountain;
The ant and the mole both sit in a hole,
And the frog peeps out of the fountain."

Home with its human inmates, let what heavenly body will ke wandering abroad, for us now, at least, is best.

CHAPTER XIII.

DAY on the river is a pleasant thing, but i must be owned it seldom sees us, like Cicer sitting in a little field near the statue Plato. We have not exactly the grove Minerva near London to philosophize shelter in, like Ulysses; though Thomson, i his hymn on Solitude, speaks of

"——— Norwood's oak-clad hill,
Where meditation has her fill."

Nevertheless, we have places that hear a kind of conversatio which, however humble may be the form, for you can't exactl expect that our young men and women will talk like Socrate

borders at least on themes discussed in the immortal Banquet and the Gorgias; and on the present occasion we are likely to have proof in point. But first, whither are we bound to-day? Thereby hangs a tale. "All that you tell me about the Danube and the Rhine may be very true," used a certain renowned boat-builder and letter-out of boats, living opposite Westminster school, to reply to some one boasting of having swum across them; "but then," he added, "you know still that the Thames is the first river in the world." There was no use of a rejoinder, had our traveller wished to contest the point with him; for, to say the truth, this boat-proprietor came of a race that would always have its own way. His father before him, when very old, had a custom on his birthday of choosing a picked crew of young watermen to row him down to Greenwich and back, for which service, so great an honour for them, he used very bountifully to give sixpence to each lad; and when expostulation was offered in joke,—for the thing was always arranged beforehand by the son, who had many years' experience of these humours,—"Pooh, pooh!" he used to say quietly, "I knew your grandfathers; how dare you look me in the face?" The young men had then to be remunerated without his knowledge, each having previously pocketed his sixpence, and put the best possible face on it. Well, after all, as far as boating is concerned, the good man was right, for the Thames beats all rivers in regard to the facilities it furnishes for that kind of pleasure.

> "Oh, loveliest there the spring days come,
> With blossoms, and birds, and wild bees' hum;
> The flowers of summer are fairest there,
> And freshest the breath of the summer air;
> And sweetest the golden autumn day
> In silence and sunshine glides away *."

Few of us have seen the green river to which these lines refer; but can any thing, I would ask, be more beautiful, or refreshing, and poetical, than the country through which you pass from Richmond to Windsor, where, as often as you please, you may obtain a river draught like Ulysses, a remedy for thirst? though

* Bryant.

I admit, lower down the stream, you might have wished for th Lacedæmonian κώθων, which is a kind of drinking-cup shape like a shoe. And the reason why it would have been so we suited to you there, is because having to drink water which not very clean, this cup, we are assured, is not one in which can be easily seen what one is drinking*; a nobler motive tha that which instigates the sly Turk to drink out of a woode flagon, which conceals the secret of his prohibited libation Not to speak of the banks familiar to us nearer London, whic we always hail, when we return to them, as "our waters," wh pleasing changes take place, after Hampton has been passed, i the character of the scenery. Every thing has a more countr look, while still,

> "Behold, th' ascending villas on my side
> Project long shadows o'er the crystal tide!"

Even the vegetation shows new forms:

> "Water-lilies in myriads rocked on the slight undulations
> Made by the passing oars ———
> Billowy bays of green ever rolling in shadow and sunshine."

Calderon makes them enter into his description of Love's own paradise:

> "On this flowery margin here,
> From whose green slopes softly slanted,
> The two lovely level plains
> Of land and river expand them,
> So contrasted in their beauty,
> In their beauty so contrasted,
> That the neutral vision doubts
> Which is grass and which is water;
> Since in bright bays here of flowers,
> In green plains of emerald glass, there
> The same waves together make,
> Now the foam-wreaths, now the branches,
> When the sunny south wind sigheth,
> When the softer zephyr panteth †."

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* Athen. xi.

† M'Carthy's translat.

What groves, too—you might fancy them, I repeat it, primeval forests—of bulrushes! Nor, as before remarked, are historical associations wanting at every step. One day, for example, being weary with rowing, or inclined to ease, which came to the same thing, we mounted on a coal-barge, to the stern of which we tied our boat, and then made acquaintance with its navigators, who were both civil and communicative, as by the way I had on a former trip occasion to relate. They told us, among other things, that this vessel belonged to the proprietor who occupied the site of the ancient Abbey of Chertsey, of which the barn is still standing. It was as if the ghost of poor King Henry, and that of Richard, too, for that matter, had been sailing along with us through these smiling meadows, until we reached the bridge and took leave of the friendly crew, to whom however one may fear such memorials were not very suggestive; but then how could you expect it to be otherwise? Beyond is Chertsey, where, by the way, Cowley thought, when he first went to dwell in the country, that "without doubt he should have met with the simplicity of the old poetical golden age, and have found no inhabitants but such as the shepherds of Sir Philip Sidney in Arcadia, or of Monsieur d'Urfe upon the banks of Lignon, and began to consider with himself which way he might recommend no less to posterity the happiness and innocence of the men of Chertsey, but to confess the truth, perceived quickly that he was still in England, and might almost as good go back and seek for exact fidelity in human conversation in the Exchange or Westminster Hall." Past, I say, these meadows, smiling in despite of such observations, which to-day strike one as rather ill-natured, you coast along a region of tall rushes, which make the Thames somewhat resemble

"Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds,"

where, by the way, I was once, through a foolish love for Virgil, on the point of being drowned among the thickly interwoven canes, too little vocal for me then, through which I had to make my way ashore up to my neck in the water, holding a bundle of them for a friend in London, who had the same weakness on that point as myself. Further on we have Runnymead and Magna Charta Island, with better associations than those

belonging to the Dutch canals, which recall the unnatural daughter and the bill of rights; and then you have above all what more immediately concerns still thirsty and spent rowers, the never-to-be-forgotten hostel of the "Five Bells" at Ouzeley. Who, I should like to know, has not heard of those "Five Bells?" recalling those of a celebrated abbey which in ancient times were proverbial for their sweetness, as an unknown correspondent, doubtless one of your "gentle readers," has lately the kindness to assure me, in a letter for which I thank him from my heart, for it is very pleasant to find that there is some one who can find time to peruse these important pages and that too without picking a quarrel with their author. Well six hours you have rowed unceasingly, wearying your young limbs, and when the seventh has sounded, there is the sign before you. It is an old, haunted-looking house, that stands solitary with some gloomy elm-trees in front, at a turn of the river, skirting majestic woods. There was once a party arrived there right merry, on a summer's evening, enjoying a serene hour, after pulling up in a randan from Richmond, and intending to pass the night there, with the consent of mine host and hostess, the obtaining of which was greatly to the credit of something or other in their appearance, soiled and weary as they were; for let me tell you, no radical-looking fellows, and no Sunday customers find a gracious welcome under that roof as they both over and over again assured their last arrivals. "You see," said my jolly landlord, whom only another Chaucer should have leave to paint, and therefore I beg pardon for this rude attempt,—"you see," he said, raising himself up majestically, and thrusting his hands deeper into his pockets, "it wouldn't do for me to take every body in like that. Around about us, as far as you can see, it is all oligarchy, and aristocracy and royalty, and my house is well known; and as for Sunday customers," he added rather contemptuously, "that wouldn't do either, for the same reason." This latter clause seemed rather to disconcert one of the party, who, fresh from the Temple, and delighted with the ale, had just been talking in a dashing way of returning to the "Bells" by himself some fine Sunday. However, the host was a well-informed man, and resolute; his nod was law all about there. He reminded one of the inn-

keeper described by Jules Janin, who, being complimented on his extensive knowledge, replied, "You see I keep a hostelry here, and then down at the last village I am proprietor of a boat; that's why I am well informed. In fact, for that matter, I mean some day or other to publish my own memoirs." I wish our friend would imitate him there; I promise you his book would be no maudlin stuff, but racy and enlivening. Well, the sun had gone down; some country people were drinking very soberly, and singing very innocently, at tables in front of the house; which company the fresh guests would no doubt have joined, had it not been for the significant looks with which the proposition was received by one of them, our counsellor of state, though it must be acknowledged, the most jovial of the crew, who demurred in rather a lofty way to that proposal, and led the rest after him—in the absence of the boat, which had been taken across to be moored on the other side, out of harm's way—into an old punt, half out of the water, where they arranged themselves round it in a more select circle than the party ashore appeared to constitute; but, as I said, this was entirely owing to him. So there they sat, and smoked, and talked, and philosophized under the stars, till it was bed-time, which on such occasions is generally earlier than in theatrical regions. I accused the house of having a haunted—meaning secretly all the while, rather cut-throat—look; and so it had, through no fault of its own, but only from its solitary, unprotected position. With certain forebodings that were half pleasant, the Argonauts mounted to their garret, and lost all memory of every thing before you could wink. But, lo! after midnight, goodness knows what hour the old clicking clock below pointed at, after dreaming about robbers, and saying in his sleep what a happy woman the hostess was to have such a crew to guard her for that night at least, one of the party was awoke, and sure enough there was a howling and a barking of a little dog, and a dismal noise of gruff voices outside. Presently he heard a window thrown open. "Who are you? What are you? Whence are you?" demands the host,—like a Geneva governess teaching her pupils to give their young ideas a philosophic turn,—when the following dialogue took place: "We want lodging." "Can't have it." "Why, man, we have pulled up to the lock

and could not get through. Why not?" "People a-bed." "Like enough." "Why not let yourselves through?" "Couldn't find the handle," roared at once many voices. "What are we to do?" "Can't say." "Surely you have beds for us?" "Not at this time of night." "Will you let us lie on the kitchen floor?" "Not by no means." "Why, old fellow, did you not get our letter ordering beds and supper?" "Ah! radicals like you should have longer memories. Have you not just been a telling me that you passed my house on to the lock? Go away. you shan't enter here, not as I knows it." The window was then slammed to. The voices grew fainter and fainter outside. and the hearer relapsed, as fine writers say, into the arms of Morpheus. And yet, poor night birds, they really told truth in part; for next morning on passing the lock and asking about them, it was answered that they had tried to get through, and been obliged to give it up; so that no doubt they spent the night in their boat, among the rushes, under Jove, where they had leisure to be serene enough and to philosophize, if they found themselves in the humour to engage in such discussions as we are recommending under all circumstances of Thames life, however untoward.

But let us commence our report of what might have been talked of on this long expedition; for as to the narrative, you have probably had enough of it. Mind, then, as was shown in our last ramble, some week or fortnight ago,—we have been hard at work ever since,—is to have its legal rights asserted, its debts of honour and obligation paid, and all its legitimate claims acknowledged by every one that seeks the enjoyment of a serene hour. But it does not follow that this supremacy is to become an absolute, despotic power, arrogating more than belongs to it, absorbing all minor rights, and seeking to exclude every thing but itself. We should then find ourselves among "the people we don't want to meet"—all whose talk, as Jules Janin says, is perfectly contrary to natural laws; since the intention of nature (are you of my opinion?) was not certainly that we should think with so much subtlety and find so many grand words. She sells these drugs very dear—does nature—she has put men in this world to live; and to live is not to pass one's time in searching for knowledge of this kind, imagining perhaps

like Sièyes, according to the observation of Mignet, that whatever can be thought can be done, and like him too exaggerating, after the manner of most of his contemporaries, "the power of mind*." One may remark thus, by the way, to account still further for our dislike of such extravagance that this disposition, which we deprecate, was really the spirit which characterized the eighteenth century. As Guizot observes, never at any epoch was mental supremacy made the source of more pride and self-satisfaction to those who pretended to it. Such fancies, however, would never agree with our proceedings. So, let me tell you, when it is a question of choosing proper companions, it is a critical moment for politicians, philosophers, and professors, and all who want to adopt their views; as we should probably conduct ourselves towards them in such a way that they would be for comparing us like Montesquieu to a cloud of insects. We have fatigue enough in general on our expeditions, without wishing, at all events, to have added that worst of all weariness arising from over mentally-refined conversation, such as wore down those who had to pass their life amidst "the diversions of Sceaux," when that little court used to be called "les Galères du Bel-Esprit." Thomas Moore thought that even the Holland-house sort of existence, though by far the best specimen of its kind going, would for any continuance be the most wearisome of all forms of slavery; and he says that he used to return with a fresh relish to his quiet garden, where he was never either offended or wearied. We conclude therefore, at once, that we are not to be, in a mental way, galley-slaves. It is quite sufficient that we pull our outrigger as men who know all the while —and we have the word of a poet for it who is no incompetent judge—that "even genius is by no means the highest thing in the world, whatever its owners may think of it; but that a far higher thing is nobleness of heart†;" in which mainly consists the supremacy of mind that we were contending for when last we met each other. Now the first condition of this legitimate government's prosperity, as indeed of its existence, is that it be constitutional, representative, practical, humble, and conscious of the limits to which it is restrained by nature and the fitness

* Études et Portraits Politiques. † Leigh Hunt.

of things; otherwise, under its influence there will be no serenity under any circumstances for any one of us.

If it be at all a question, therefore, of introducing such a tyranny, the proper thing for us on setting out to-day,—no offence to philosophers being intended,—would be to say like the goat in the stable, when spying the wolf outside, who thought to get in by means of the pass-word,

"Montrez-moi patte blanche, ou je n'ouvrirai point;"

or it would be to use the very words that a poor boy was overheard addressing to one smaller than himself, as they were both entering Kensington Gardens, and the latter, with an eye on the tall keeper, seemed somewhat afraid of the consequences of some former malpractices of his own, "You can come," said the elder one, "if you be quiet." It is against no imaginary grievance that we are now advising our excursionists to stand on their guard, as if near an enemy's frontier; for though there may be no danger of meeting those men against whom Athenæus cautions his readers, lest they should be misled by their ragged cloaks and unshaven chins*, it is very possible that in some form or other they may fall in with intellectual pride, which is seldom content "to be quiet," and which is an element hostile to the object they have in view.

"Je blâme ici plus de gens qu'on pense."

There is a great deal more of this article in the world of bookmen than many of us are prepared to find, though when grown to full dimensions, as in atheists, it forms only the monsters and anomalies of human-kind, none of whom, you may well suppose, we wish to come into close contact with. However, without imagining such an extreme case, there are still plenty of persons like the suitors in Homer, κακῶς ὑπερηνορέοντες, out of whom no one can make any thing in our way decent or fit for use, just to use the old saying, as no one can make a spear out of a bulrush. The French Academicians complained that their nation had imbibed a foreign poison when it became familiar with the writings that had birth under another climate, which

* Lib. v.

had led them grossly to mistake the wanderings of a strong imagination for depth, and the audacity of a reckless mind for the flight of a soul which rises above the prejudices of the multitude*. By consorting with such spirits we should be "much out of quiet," as Maria says of her lady. "No, no," as the tragedian says, "it is not even free from harm that a too wise cleverness is in the wise." In fact, 'twere better to be a tick in a sheep than such a valiant ignorance. Pride belongs to talents as distinguished from genius, which for the reason that it wants that parasite has a greater capacity for the serene. "Genius," as De Quincey remarks, "moves in alliance with the powers of receiving pleasure and pain, whereas talent is perfectly independent of all human sensibilities. Genius represents the total nature of man, and therefore his enjoying and suffering nature, whilst, on the contrary, talent represents only a single function of that nature, his knowing nature. Talent speaks only from the insulated intellect, and has no shadow of a relation to moral qualities any more than to vital sensibilities, whereas genius interprets the synthesis of the human spirit." It is men of talent on the whole who will not hear of there being any thing to fear from the pride which belongs to such intellectual pre-eminence. They will never advise you to be on your guard against it; they will repeat the contrary counsel, saying,

> "Mariez-vous, ma sœur, à la philosophie,
> Qui nous monte au-dessus de tout le genre humain,
> Et donne à la raison l'empire souverain."

And there are victims too, who can say like Chrysale,

> "Raisonner est l'emploi de toute ma maison;
> Et le raisonnement en bannit la raison."

Without any official occasion for it, there is such a thing as the head being overworked; and some there are who are reasonable only when they have ceased to think about any thing. Thinking overmuch is the fault, or rather the disease of many who are for turning every subject into matter for a philosophical lecture. But this is not as it should be, though we were never to have a

* Hist. de l'Acad. des Inscr. tom. viii. 37.

holiday, but to stick to business all our lives. We can't live long on thinking, or on idle talking, or writing either to suit it, for that matter. And by the way, be it remembered that it is to the love of such conversations, carried on in some celebrated drawing-rooms of the seventeenth century, that we owe two books of very questionable utility, the Thoughts of Pascal, and the Maxims of La Rochefoucauld; both incomparable in their way, but either of which, if made the staple of conversation, or only allowed to give a tone to it, would put an effectual extinguisher on our project of enjoying mental brightness for a few hours. "My only reflections now," says a celebrated foreign author, "were about the danger of reflecting. I had had too much of it at once. What I required now was to forget the world of ideas, and to abandon myself to the peaceful life of sentiment and of juvenile activity. Man, in fact, is not made for always thinking. When he thinks overmuch, he goes mad; just as when he does not think enough he grows stupid." It is even Pascal himself who says, "we are neither angels nor brutes." Habits of intellectual tyranny no doubt should be avoided on a graver account, which it is not for us to dwell on just as yet; for

> "——— the seeds of all
> Man's vicious frailty may be said to abide
> And have their confluence in only pride;
> It stupifies man's reason so, and dulls
> True sense of every thing but what may fall
> In his own glory, quenches all the spirits
> That light a man to honour and true goodness."

When Duchauffeur had been executed in the Place de Grève, and all Paris was talking of him one evening, Voltaire being found silent and sad, some one asked his niece, Madame Denis, what was the matter with him. "Hush!" she said, "he is jealous of the man that was hanged*." People of this kind grow envious of those who would sap the faith of a whole nation, provided they can only get themselves talked about. However, we seldom fall in with such magicians. Contemplation makes rare turkey-cocks of them: how they jet under their advance

* Janin, Les Contes du Chalet.

plumes! I do believe that in general the sort of spirits that are attracted by the prospect of a serene hour on the Thames, or any where else indeed, are the least exposed to this danger; their general maxim is apt to be

> "D'en chercher la raison, ce sont soins superflus.
> Dieu fit bien ce qu'il fit, et je n'en sais pas plus."

But as persons of eminent talents will be of their number sometimes, gentlemen of admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic in their place and person, generally allowed for their many learned preparations, and as most of us know some one supereminent reading man or other who runs a risk of being infected this way, it is right that they should hear the caveat propounded by Richard of St. Victor, saying, "A very rare thing it is, and the property of a few, to perform great deeds and not think oneself great; to be pre-eminent over many, and to despise no one; to excel, and not to say with the Pharisee, 'Non sum sicut cæteri hominum*.'" But it would never do for persons bound on such a quest as ours, whatever might be their abilities or position, to have thoughts of this kind, or a spirit unsuitable to man, even in the schools of philosophy where ability is so prized. No, no, 'twill be some days ere we seek to renew a meeting with such philosophers, so we leave them to their wisdom. The boat will be the quieter. Clearly, it would never answer to have as companion a sort of rebel angel, or a puppet trying to play that part, to be frightened and teased with his tricks of letting appear mental supereminence at every turn, or with the proud ambition of an intemperate sophist, seeking every moment to disturb our rest on most solid things by inviting us to pass beyond the limits assigned to human knowledge.

> "Nous l'estimerions plus s'il étoit ignorant,"

as the philosophic poet says in his fable. To say nothing as to what would be gained in respect to wisdom and true philosophy, consider only what a charm, what a grace, what an absence of pedantry and silly affected indignation, and of every thing that

* De Sacrificio Abrahæ.

interferes with the sweetness and ease of social intercourse, would follow from complying with the injunction of St. Paul, "Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem." This might be the motto of all our young parties. Though they were to navigate, like Chaucer's shipman, "from Hull to Cartage," the style of our excursionists must be unpretending and simple, as modest, in fact, as that of Sophocles when he suggests the reply "I know not; and in matters on which I have no understanding I prefer being silent." Within such domains of thought they'll decline the whole question. "Don't speak to me then, when within their pale, of science," says one of the great classics of our serene literature, looking for the moment at the abuses and misapplication of method. "I hate it, and I despise it; I hate it, because it withers, and breaks, and destroys, and defiles—because it handles and fingers what we should touch only with our hearts. I despise it, because for any high moral purpose, let sophists say what they will, it is useless in the long run; because it divines nothing that much concerns us; because it explains nothing when you reach the limits of the unknown; because it does not of itself cast the least glimmer upon the immense doubt of the humanity that so foolishly looks up to it"—and he might have added, while occupied with its perversion, because it makes men vain and overbearing, and intensely disagreeable. But this is a result that would prove fatal to such proceedings as we are recommending. The serenity of our haunts, let who will be with us, is so far like that of heaven that it cannot tolerate the presence of intellectual pride. In that respect it is like poetry too, alluding to which Cowley, speaking of a place in Jersey that seems named after the latter, says playfully,

> "Mount Orgueil! which in scorn o' th' Muses' law
> With no yoke-fellow word will deign to draw;
> Stubborn Mount Orgueil! 'tis a work to make it
> Come into rhyme, more hard than 'twere to take it."

Certainly it were harder to make such a spirit companionable and a source of enjoyment on a holiday than to storm its strongholds, wherever they may be, and demonstrate the weakness of all its works—

"Quid æternis consiliis animum fatigas?"

"Of what service to me," exclaims St. Augustine, "was this talent for science? Of what use to me was it to have unravelled the most difficult works, when a shameful and sacrilegious ignorance led me away so far from the doctrines of piety? and what harm was there in that slowness of comprehension of others when humble and simple they remained with God, and waited in safety in the nest of the Church till they were feathered and winged?" It is not that any of our serene fraternity are such idiots as to object to science in itself; we only recoil instinctively from the disagreeable pride which tends to the abuse and even to the limitation and interruption of science. The sciences even are all on our side, not alone in that respect, but in every other; for they establish and confirm in their way all that deeply affects us. Men of science sometimes depart from God, the sciences never; and it is a man of great science, please to remark, who says this*. "Christians," he adds, "should never, through contempt for the former, repudiate or despise the latter. Let us not confound," he says, "two kinds of disdain,—the ridiculous disdain of ignorance, which has the air of despising what it is ignorant of and what it does not dare to touch, and the legitimate disdain of Christian science, which laughs in its turn at the attacks of pride, simply because it knows more than it, because it mounts higher, and because it has found a light on the other side of the mountain of dust which pride had raised to intercept it. Let us not descend to the stupid disdain of the ignorant, but let us rise to the tranquil disdain of the Christian philosopher." So far, then, no one in the interest of science and of progress has any right to accuse us; but then very possibly, on the other hand, the lovers of the serene will be apt sometimes to prefer for their own parts studies of a different order, and even to account for their choice by referring us to the very words of St. Augustine just cited. "We shall not even be philosophers," says the Père Boutauld, "until the philosophy of the angels in heaven will become our business here below, and the philosophy of men only our relaxation and amusement." "The proper happiness of

* Cochin.

man," as Butler remarks when treating on human ignorance "does not consist in knowledge, in the gaining and not in th possessing of which the mind is entertained. It is evident tha there is another mark set up for us to aim at,—another end ap pointed us to direct our lives to,—another end which the mos knowing may fail of and the most ignorant arrive at—the knowl ledge and practice of our duty. Our province," he says, "is th science of improving the temper, and making the heart better*. There is no philosophy to be ascribed to such as have no re goodness. As our old poet says,

> "This shows their knowledge is mere ignorance,
> Their far-fetch'd dignity of soul a fancy,
> And all their square pretext of gravity
> A mere vain-glory; hence, away with them!
> I will prefer for knowledge none but such
> As rule their lives by it, and can becalm
> All sea of humour with the marble trident
> Of their strong spirits; others fight below
> With gnats and shadows; others nothing know."

In regard to the affectation of knowledge, to be sure, there's n disputing about tastes; but what a singular amusement even i it to pass hours intended for peaceful enjoyment in laying dow the law on subjects on which, by reasoning and natural light, i is impossible to arrive at any exact understanding of things and where thought dislimns thought's image, and "makes i indistinct as water is in water." For serene hours, as I believ for all others, we must make up our minds to be content wit very imperfect knowledge, at least in regard to the loftiest o all sciences—theology, which, as Montesquieu remarks, is "a limited as it is extensive," and in which are many points that like the doctrine of curves, are reserved for the comprehension of the Supreme Intelligence. "Come, crack me this nut of phi losophy," as some one says, "and take the maggot for thy labour;" for indeed it is a fusty nut with no kernel. "We swim over the great river of spiritual mysteries," says Richard of St. Victor, assuming that we enter wholesome waters with a good intention, "but we bring to the bank scarcely a few drops

* Upon the Ignorance of Man.

of their latent sweetness; though we do not come to shore with dry or parched lips*." This is looking on the project in the best light, and supposing the happiest possible result; but much oftener when disposed to this kind of natation, it is into a sort of Dead Sea that we throw ourselves, from which, if we don't sink to the bottom, as old travellers say we must infallibly, owing to the lightness of its waters, we shall come to shore more thirsty than ever, fatigued, perplexed, and unfit company for any one, if we have not even lost our wits altogether, with our mental clothes, as by such exercises many have done. For only observe what persons of this kind are prepared for. They are ready to scout the faith of the greatest intelligences, to give the lie to and explain away the oldest Christian traditions, the plainest texts of the holy Scripture, which, for all that they affirm, is something like wishing to contradict God himself, and in conclusion of all this, perhaps, to say that they must be right if they are determined by their eyes and other senses. They merit only Bellamente's indignant answer—

> "If there be eyes! Is that your proof? Lay such
> A cause upon the strength of a weak sense,
> That is a thousand ways deceived! your eyes!"

Calderon de la Barca, in his sublime "Auto—Los encantos de la Culpa," represents such philosophers in that symbolic man who invites his five senses, unguided by "Understanding," to examine the great mystery of the Christian altar. The Senses approach, —the Smell, the Taste, the Touch, the Sight, the Hearing,— and each and all assent to the voice of folly, pronouncing that it is alone what they apprehend. Then, after hearing them, the Understanding, heeding not their assertions, acquiesces in what Faith asserts, and ends the argument in saying,

> "This one reason brings contentment unto me."

"Yes," the man concludes,

> "thou'rt right,
> Lead in safety hence my Senses.
> Let us to our ship; for here
> All is shadowy and unsettled;"

* In Apocalyps. lib. ii. c. 3.

when the great scene closes with the glorious chorus, and th burst of triumphant Christian patriotism,

> "Over all the world be fêted,
> Specially within Madrid's
> City, where Spain's proud heart swelleth,
> Which, in honouring God's Body,
> Takes the foremost place for ever *."

But we are dwelling on details uncalled for here. Let us retu to what is general in the dangers of an earthly proud conceit wisdom, though why protract even such abstract views? cut the matter short, it is, one might say, nothing but the sa old history again repeated, as when our first father would kn the secrets of every thing around him.

> "The only science man by this did get
> Was but to know he nothing knew;
> He straight his nakedness did view,
> His ign'rant poor estate, and was ashamed of it;
> Yet searches probabilities,
> And rhetoric and fallacies,
> And seeks, by useless pride,
> With slight and with'ring leaves that nakedness to hide †."

Those who fancy that they always take a perfectly exact vie of every thing in the universe are incurably disqualified f feeling at home in such company as we are anxious of joinin while it is pretty certain, as Fontenelle remarks, "that th who have a less idea of themselves, and of their intellectu powers, are seldom, even in regard to other eligibilities, witho their recompense." We live, it is true, in the midst of a ra of very knowing people and of scientific gentlemen, who, lik that Sir Pol in the old comedy, will be ignorant of nothin who might be excused if confining such ambition within th limits of science they had been content after having, "amongs other achievements, brought to perfection ether and opium an all kinds of deadly weapons,—who can compose a poison fro peach-kernels of which one drop will kill an ox, and who ca put an elephant to death by blowing a drop of milk into it

* M'Carthy's translat. † Cowley.

veins." For all that, and though they have "put a girdle round the earth," Richard of St. Victor would remind them that they cannot understand how we pull a single stroke of the oar, or move from our bench to help any one in or out of the boat, or tumble head over heels on the grass. "See for yourself," he says, "how incomprehensible all this is. The instant the mind wishes, the foot or hand is moved. What is there in the nature of things more dissimilar than spirit and body? and yet, pray, where is there such a unanimity of perfect concord, that in one and the same moment we have only to will for the thing to be done*?" "Science," says Lacordaire, "as well as religion demands of its followers that humility which is a great part of common sense. A man of true science, initiated in the secret of his weakness by the wonders which he has examined, bows down before Him who has created the universe, and who can alone fathom its depths. Such a lover of wisdom confesses that he knows nothing, not like the sceptic in an absolute sense, but in the sense which implies the voluntary submission of the mind of man before the Spirit of God; and this one act of voluntary submission even alone by itself constitutes faith." When it is a question then of meeting, or of having any thing to do on a summer's day with men of a contrary type, there is sufficient ground for our demurring, not alone for the sake of that serenity which arises from the exercise of common sense, but on purely philosophic ground also.

Above all, as already suggested, but it cannot be too often repeated, there is the consideration of being preserved from hearing questioned the great unfathomable mysteries which are contained in religion, that spirits of this description would undertake to solve without being taught by any one commissioned from heaven to propound them for us. "Truly they that have good wits," as Touchstone says, "have much to answer for." Within this sphere, as in every other, they would always be for insisting on rigorous and stringent conclusions. But why conclude at all where premises and certainty by the very nature of things are excluded? why not rest contented for the present, and wait? "That sort of arrogance is to be derided,"

* Benj. Maj. ii. 17.

says Cicero, for one has sometimes to call on a pagan to ba
us up when assailed by men calling themselves Christians, a
he is taking our side here,—"when a man pretends to ha
learned to command 'quinqueremes,' or even greater vesse
who confesses all the while that he can do nothing in t
smallest craft." We should laugh at a man on the Thames w
able to scull a skiff without catching crabs and asking to ma
one of an eight-oar. Well, it seems quite as absurd to find
man so excellently ignorant placing himself in a position wh
after all his boasting he must either avow that he knows n
what he thought himself assured of, or enter upon a long tr
of reasoning which in the end, as Montesquieu even sa
amounts precisely to the same condition. This is to be
pedant keeping school in the church. We on the river have n
seen such a thing as 'tis. We can hardly forbear hurling thi
at him.

"Beyond a doubt," says Richard elsewhere, "human d
cretion is powerless to form any judgment of truth unless it
shone upon by that light which illuminateth not a few pro
sophists, but every man coming into this world*," which it
the avowed object of these few sophists to intercept from
all, by telling us that we must not think or talk like the vulg
and using that term to denote those who follow the great i
stincts and traditions of the human race. So he draws t
inference practically in these humble words, "We have done o
best to explain these difficult passages, ready to learn tru
things respecting them, if any man should teach us†." An
in another place, he cannot propose to investigate a question
this kind without making an apology, saying "that at his i
tention, whoever wishes may laugh, and justly. But that
the ass stopped Balaam, so he feels urged forward, as if hearin
that He who can teach him how and what to speak will enab
him to accomplish this enterprise‡." And all this said simpl
without affectation.

Thus did he prove himself one of those who in every ag
might use the words of Foscari,

* In Ps. xc. † De Tabernaculo.
‡ De Trinitate, lib. iii. c. 1.

"——————— Say I am
Noble but humblest in my thoughts."

Whoever considers calmly and dispassionately all the bold queries deemed unanswerable by the four denominations of sceptics whom Cudworth presents before his reader, will arrive at this conclusion, that all the grand mysteries of the false philosophy, which, without losing the coolness of a sage, he says, may be also called the mysteries of the kingdom of darkness, have for their only source and foundation an overweening and irrational pride, which prevents men from seeing with their great intelligence, and in common with the simplest of the common people, if their reasonings were explained to them, that "all forms of atheism are unintelligible nonsense, and an absolute impossibility to human reason." The Darwinian theory founds the pedigree of living nature upon the most elementary form of vitalized matter (whatever that means). One step farther (I hardly see the need of that step) would enable us, we are told, to recognize in ourselves, and in the exquisite elaboration of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, the ultimate results of mere material forces, left free to follow their own unguided tendencies. "But, surely," adds even a modern scientific observer, "our minds would in that case be more oppressed with a sense of the miraculous than they now are in attributing the wondrous things around us to the creative hand of a great presiding Intelligence. The hypothesis on every ground must appear to common apprehensions to be pushed beyond the limits of reasonable conjecture." This is a soft answer, and further on more accommodating still, though it is always something to have been left by such explorers even a capital letter and the word Intelligence, of which it forms a part. But whatever in this respect wisdom may demand, which it is for others to show,

"For why should we now enter into philosophy,
Who do profess the fine kind of courtesie?"

the interests that concern us at present, and which alone we are pleading for, imperatively require people to be humble in their thoughts. In the construction of no boat that we hire on the Thames has there ever entered a piece of wood from the forest

of Dodona, as there was in the Argo, enabling it to rend oracular answers. Our bark cannot be called either 'loqua or 'sacra.' We have no pretensions arising from any singul gift of Minerva*; and indeed, generally, as often as we wou rise above the commonest details of life, to please ourselv really, and to please all others that are worth pleasing, we mu be prepared, as Richard of St. Victor mystically explains it, "offer a goat in sacrifice with David, which we do," he say "when we make the offering that is acceptable to men as to Go of a little becoming bashfulness in humility of heart†," knov ing, with every nimble-footed mad-cap rover who has outgrow his Goody Two-shoes, comrade of the grey fly winding its sulti horn, that unless we imitate the life of otters in the summ time, we are but creatures whose very energies entail on us th consequence that we cannot correspond even with our ow sense of what is quite agreeable,—aware that we must oft feel a certain natural diffidence as if we were not exactly in respects presentable, and conscious at all times that we dar not acknowledge so much as a fancy which can be pleased wi some of the most conspicuous and sensible attributes of our ma terial construction, much less come up spiritually to what is de manded of us by the pure reason of others, idly invoking here disembodied state, or soar at once above the moral exigencies o our present infantine condition.

To be distinguished in the way that your proud aspirants t mental superiority desire, excepting in the domain of the phy sical sciences, where, of course, success is attainable and not o necessity attended by the dangerous results of becoming thereby ridiculous, it is necessary, on the contrary, to affect an igno rance of all this, and to assume a character of grave perfection involving much self-sufficiency and self-assurance which, while at variance with the first elements of what concerns us most to acquire, is specially antagonistic with the sort of mind that is desirable on occasions of the sort that we are considering, when every one, in regard to some mysterious subjects, should obey the counsel, "give it an understanding, but no tongue." To be

* Les Argonautes, Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscr. tom. xiii.

† De Sacrificio David.

a man of this self-important description one must have the air of knowing perfectly and profoundly every thing on earth, and that, let me tell you, is a character whom an individual of our species, in one respect like a dog, whose taste resembles that of his master, would shrink away from though he should have to hide himself in the Antipodes. In short, to become an adept this way, one must have made oneself like book-blinded or thought-bewildered men, arrogating an artificial sublimity which, however it may frighten others, has nothing real to sustain it, as any woman can prove to you in a moment by merely a sly smile that is sufficient to overthrow and pulverize the whole proud edifice. Then again the mere fact of a man being led, like these bookish people, by what this or that writer lays down out of his own head, is enough to involve him in a world of trouble and uncertainty, and even at times in a consciousness of intellectual dishonour, since, as Asall replies to one so disposed,

> "———— 'Tis a fault
> In my apprehension: another's knowledge,
> Applied to my instruction, cannot equal
> My own soul's knowledge how to inform acts;
> The sun's rich radiance, shot through waves most fair,
> Is but a shadow to his beams i' the air;
> His beams, that in the air we so admire,
> Is but a darkness to his flame in fire;
> In fire, his fervour but as vapour flies,
> To what his own pure bosom rarefies;
> And the Almighty wisdom, having given
> Each man within himself an apter light
> To guide his acts, than any light without him,
> (Creating nothing not in all things equal,)
> It seems a fault in any that depend
> On others' knowledge, and exile their own *."

And what, after all, does this wonderful knowledge picked up from others, and marshalled with such airs often against what is most sacred, frequently amount to? I will keep still with my philosopher. "Why," one of the ancients demanded, "do you swagger, knowing, in point of fact, of yourself nothing?

* Chapman's Chabot.

You are a Platonist among grammarians, but with Plato you are a grammarian again. Having a smack of all things, and nothing of your own, you are all the while imperfect in every thing," while a common fellow, or one of the lower orders, who follows the high road prescribed by God in his supernatural revelation, has a great deal of his own in his mind and heart both naturally and supernaturally imparted; and in what most concerns him he is perfect. Molière goes farther in his true wisdom of life, saying,

> "Et c'est mon sentiment qu'en faits comme en propos
> La science est sujette à faire de grands sots."

This at first seems rather rude, so that for "the like of us" who love politeness, as well as for critics by profession, a little question presents itself here, as one of the latter says when concluding his account of Bernardine de St. Pierre. We are tempted then to ask innocently, Are such people really as tiresome to listen to as to read about? Many grave persons at the present day will try to persuade you that they are not. It is unfortunate, however, for them that such of our excursionists as have had personal experience will reply without hesitation as La Bruyère answered in reference to that philosopher, Yes*. It is not unfair, besides, to suggest that this wonderful knowledge merely consists in a partial view of some one truth to which another truth has to be sacrificed. Without this kind of intellectual legerdemain you will have nothing solemn that smacks of mental superiority, only good fellows, thinking, like all the world, persons fit to accompany a man on his rambles for recreation,—simple, unselfish, unpretending characters,—for all their self-reliance, in a common-sense kind of way, not imagining that they are themselves entitled to any extraordinary regards as being wiser than their neighbours, or that they have a right to be egotists in consideration of their superiority. But, in order to be able to contradict with assurance, no matter what, and to speak contemptuously perhaps even of the faith of others, you must be one who frames or adopts a system. "Now," as M. de Sacy says, "to found a school of philosophy one must

* Sainte-Beuve, Causeries, &c., tom. xv.

bring into prominent relief one side of truth to the detriment of other sides. The grand thing in that case is to strike hard. Say that sensation and matter are the whole of man—nothing simpler, you will be understood and followed,—you will found a school. Say that mind and intelligence are the whole of man, you will be a master, and you will have a nation of disciples," and so on through the whole encyclopædia, including morals and theology. All that may be very well in its way, and answer the purpose you may have with more or less consciousness in view; but I promise you, if metaphysicians will pardon my giving so abrupt a turn to the subject, it won't be so easy for you while possessing such a character to get up a crew on the Thames, or a party to Hampstead Heath for holding hands at the ring, or to be admitted as an eligible companion, instead of being avoided as a bore by those who have met you formerly, for partaking with them of a few pleasant and untroubled hours. However, for once in a way, to put on the cap of wisdom, I must beg leave to suggest that "the full exposition of truth" is not "the great object," as some pretend, "for which the existence of mankind is prolonged on earth." Butler shivered the foundations on which such an opinion rests. Man is not sent into the world merely to cultivate knowledge which he will probably obtain at the full the moment he leaves it. For what then is he sent? To glorify the Creator as his rational creature distinct from all other animals, and that not by anticipating his knowledge, but by loving Him, and enjoying the gift of life, which of course does not exclude the cultivation of knowledge for those who have a facility and taste that way; but which is a gift no less divine and happy when it includes only a discharge of the duties and an enjoyment of the ordinary pleasures of an existence of which love is the spirit and the law. "I have always," says a celebrated French author, "desired to live with gay rather than with grave persons. Since coming to mature age above all I love artistic characters, instinctive intelligences."

In fine, however you may stare with astonishment to hear it, what is wanted for an agreeable day's excursion is what is wanted for the schools of philosophy in particular, and generally for mankind and for the world in all ages,—it is (not to depreciate any study, which may be harmless or even useful as

an exercise, by naming it here rhetorically for exclusion) simply faith, a very necessary thing in all studies, but in the formation of a good companion indispensable. M. de Sacy, though a great stickler for the rights of reason, says, in regard to its interests, that philosophy has been very ungrateful to faith. "Faith is the necessary supplement to philosophy, if you do not wish it to languish in doubt. Faith ennobles philosophy, gives it an object, and teaches us what is the signification of that perpetual revolution of the most illustrious geniuses in a circle of mysteries, of which all their efforts have never been able to pierce the darkness." On the other hand, after this honest confession, people may cheerfully admit, with the same eminent author, that "those do not comprehend faith who insult philosophy. Philosophy will be always a noble study, its true ultimate tendency being, in a subsidiary way, to habituate man to detach himself from this life, and to extend his views to a world where alone he will possess what he loves and seeks after." It is not that we are supposing men to be in such a position that in order to enjoy serene hours they are to give up certainty, and adopt the fatal notion that truths which it concerns us to know in this life are unattainable. One does not indeed exactly see why it should be absolutely necessary to believe in nothing in order to be an agreeable companion, though a very accomplished French critic seems to be of that opinion when explaining why he disliked the salon of Mme. Swetchine. But such impressions belong not to every one, and least of all to the lovers of serene hours. So far otherwise, it is felt among all men of a natural and ingenuous turn of mind to be an "uncertain, unsatisfactory, and vexatious thing, not alone contending," as Cicero complained, with Academicians, but simply hearing or having any thing to do with such people, "who affirm nothing, and, on subjects where scepticism implies no penetration and still less virtue, as if through despair of arriving at essential truths, say that they are content to follow what, according to them, only seems probable*." Truly, as Chaucer said,

"The greatest clerks beth not the wisest men."

* De Finibus, ii.

But people in general do not feel themselves reduced to such a dilemma. "Shades there are in this night of our exile," as Mme. Swetchine says, "but there is no darkness." Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Christianity is not a narrow place, in which one is straitened and incapable of finding that contentment which enters into the plan of the Ruler and Author of the human race. Though it is premature to suggest it, as the whole subject will recur to us in another form on a future day not far distant now, "we ought to believe then," as Lacordaire says, "in the Church, which believes nothing but what is true, and good, and beautiful. It is this faith that will render us even master of our intelligence, master of the world and human genius. For the intelligence of man is weak against itself, and still weaker against the world and the ascendancy of a superior mind. If we do not believe in the Church, we shall believe in ourselves; and if we believe in ourselves, we shall, after all, be only believing in the first comer who will be able to determine our persuasion from having more science and talent than ourselves. The servitude of minds out of the Church," he continues, "is horrible to think of. It is Christ who by the Church delivers minds from this slavery; and the loudest cry of liberty that the world ever heard is this, 'credo in sanctam ecclesiam Catholicam.' As civil society delivers men from injustice, the Church delivers minds from delusion. He who leaves the pale of civil society becomes a tyrant or a victim; he who voluntarily, and with all his consciousness about him, quits the pale of the Church, becomes a slave or the absolute ruler of another's thoughts*." And observe, too, in conclusion, what a serene element it must be to have one's mind impressed with a knowledge of the antiquity of this reliance on doctrine which we deem so natural and essential to our kind of suburban gymnasium, where, as a condition of its existence at all, we seek alike both serenity and certainty as to truth, without which the former could only exist by dint of forgetfulness or brutish insensibility; for, as Balzac says, "we learn that there were sages formed by it before philosophy was heard of, and that these sages were our fathers. Before there were schools of

* Lacordaire, Lettres à un jeune Homme, &c.

Athens, a Porch, a Lyceum, or an Academy, we know that there was a sovereign reason, a revealed truth, a celestial Academy. Besides the doctors divinely taught, and the inspired prophets, we know that there were men to whom, as the most learned Fathers believed, there was granted a light which, however feeble, was sufficient to guide them to everlasting felicity." You see, then, the intellectual advantages of faith, involving even consequences respecting the formation of an eligible companion and a suitable state of mind for enjoying peace. If any disagreeable devil comes up, sly, contentious, and desirous of drawing others on to forsake these principles, as not favourable to their pride, nor leading to results sufficiently distinct,—for you'll be put questions that would afflict an oracle to understand and answer, nor have we to say on some points what is clear among mortals,—the best thing that they can do, in regard to both spheres of interest, is simply to show him a fair pair of heels, throwing to him over their shoulder, as they leave him, like the good French mareschal, that we before heard of, the words of a deep thinker who had fathomed with disquietude all the passes of intellectual danger, and who, when arrived at the serene state in which her latter years were spent, thought it enough to sum up her experience in saying, "J'aime mieux l'ombre du côté de Dieu que la lumière du côté des hommes*." All this you may ponder upon later, for here you will have no summary. The discussion has been sufficiently protracted:

———— ἐχθρὸν δέ μοί ἐστιν,
αὖτις ἀριζήλως εἰρημένα μυθολογεύειν.

Besides, to say honestly the truth, this cap of wisdom is unpleasant. I am ill at ease in this chair; I could at our boat's bench, sleeping and all, sit twenty times as long. Go in with me to recreate your spirits,

> "As musick theirs, with some refreshing song
> Whose patience our grave scene hath held too long."

But now the dusk thickens, and all the ways are darkened.

* Mdme. Swetchine, Pensées.

"The sun is set; the swallows are asleep;
The bats are flitting fast in the grey air;
The slow soft toads out of damp corners creep,
And evening's breath, wandering here and there,
Over the quivering surface of the stream,
Wakes not one ripple from its silent dream."

The late talkers seem inclined to let their tongues rest. They stoop over their oars, and the swift vessel, with a rushing sound, cuts through the water; ambiguous channels, islands, bridges, shallows, all are past without disaster; and lights, with a boy's voice inviting them to pull in where he stands,—for there is always some juvenile where any thing is going on or likely to go on,—announce the return to the boat-house.

CHAPTER XIV.

N some people's point of view the middle of the Thames without a boat in any given neighbourhood would seem rather a queer place to appoint a friend or two to meet you in. Nevertheless, and though there are no longer any Hamadryad nymphs, daughters of the river, who used to traverse these ambrosial depths with rosy feet, such assignations are being often made during the summer months. Accordingly, here, off an island opposite to Strawberry Hill, are four friends met from different parts of London, arrived in two separate boats now hid among the rushes, who are, if not exactly with rosy feet in ambrosial depths, at least up to their necks in the water, after having had previously a long swim, and finding it all serene within and about them. It did not continue long so, however, owing to a very untoward circumstance, which I must proceed to relate. They had played in the water up and down the stream, and were in the act of holding a sort of congress to

deliberate on what was to be done next, when, as old ballads about Edward IV. and the tanner might say,

> "They were aware of a bold bargee
> Come towing along the waye."

No one had cause of complaint against this vessel, belonging to the west country, as it was towed up the river; but, nevertheless, against all reason, suddenly one member of the council, and certainly not its Nestor on that occasion, without any preliminary negotiations, without any conference with his allies, or intimation of his intentions to those who were sure to be gravely compromised by them, stoops down and, as if all diplomatic resources were exhausted, commences hostilities with the bargeman, as that individual's legal advocate, if the event had led to his employing one like him who pleaded against Aunt Sally. would say, by propelling a hard conglomerate at him, or, as we should say, by shying a small stone at him, as he stood erect with arms akimbo at the bow of his vessel. Your bargee, like a true Briton, is always a determined character, averse to display, but ready for action. He said nothing, but let himself drop down into the hold and disappear below. In a twinkling he came up again, like Polyphemus himself, with a load of some four or five brickbats under each arm. Not a word is spoken. Splash! goes a brick close to the chief belligerent power; whirr! flies another in the midst of the allies. Another and another deadly missile in rapid succession, like so many vast rocks hurled by a giant's arm, cause the water to fly as foam before a storm. They swim to right, they swim to left, they jump out of the water in desperation; by a greater mistake they dive to the ambiguous depths under it, as if bricks would float. But the barge has passed, and there are no floating dead or even wounded to pick up; the escape from *αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον* is something marvellous. Not an angry word has broken the stillness of the evening air, but a volley of laughter is discharged against the enemy as he moves majestically on his upward way, leaving the victory after all doubtful, and, moreover, leaving behind him,—for I won't speak of what may have passed in his own breast,—completely restored, as he found it, even while he is yet in sight, a serene state of things, which

became only the more savoury for the little incident, worthy of a Homer's pen, that was so near bringing it to an abrupt and somewhat perhaps tragical termination.

Well, here is grass to recline on after the adventure, so ceasing wholly to think about it any more, as this time we were kept from the blow of the law, Her Majesty's judges not being appealed to, though certainly elsewhere it should be booked with the rest of this day's proceedings, and indeed were it represented in a picture at the top of it, there might be scope for some artistic skill, let us proceed to our accustomed discussions, following up the subject of our last conference.

The rights of mind being then recognized as an essential preliminary towards bringing to a happy issue every excursion in quest of serene hours, let us proceed to observe that the intelligence must be exercised not only without pride, as we have lately endeavoured to show, but also without pedantry,

> "Sans tant de contredits et d'interlocutoires,
> Et de fatras et de grimoires;"

and, moreover, without allowing the genius of criticism to exercise an inordinate influence on our views of what is observed. Such is the subject which I propose for consideration now. I know very well that it would require some talent for clever writing, and great power of bringing things out in an attractive manner, to discuss the point properly, and I am no philosophic writer, or the twentieth part of a Caxton, to do the thing as it ought to be done; yet, for all that, as Monipodeo, the captain of the brigands, created by Cervantes, would say, "if I tuck up my shirt sleeves, I can let you have as many sentences at least, if not verses, as will serve the purpose."

But let us add another prelude in the form of a picture. Supposing, then, that when you are at home there is a window in your room, such as it is,—but I forget myself, and we have full liberty now to suppose your dwelling as being as grand as possible, and commanding views over parks and gardens worthy of the Arabian Nights,—and the public will think all the better of us if we are supposed to inhabit some "capital mansion,"—supposing, then, all this, I will say with Montalto,

"———— Have you never
Look'd from the prospect of your palace window,
When some fair sky courted your eye, to read
The beauties of a day; the glorious sun
Enriching so the bosom of the earth,
That trees and flowers appear'd but like so much
Enamel upon gold; the wanton birds,
And every creature but the drudging ant,
Despising providence, and at play; and all
That world you measure with your eye, so gay
And proud, as winter were no more to shake
His icy locks upon them, but the breath
Of gentle zephyr to perfume their growth,
And walk eternally upon the spring?"

Then, I must ask, would you, who very possibly may understand no heathen language, feel great pleasure at being set forth for a walk through that smiling paradise, having for your companion a strong tedious talker, armed with ancient tongues, who "his reasons ever speaks full solemnly," though it were to declare, in the language of Chaucer, that he never "knew a draught of London ale?" or would it much enhance your enjoyment

"To see your comrade lift his nose
To tell what ev'ry schoolboy knows,
Then with his finger or his thumb
Explaining, strike opposers dumb?"

Would you like to have at your side one resembling the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, who "had it not in his power to understand what is involved in the word 'tiresome;'" or a quick fellow after the fashion of Puntarvolo with Ben Jonson, who when you would ask him a very common question, could only tell you that another neither his brain nor his body being yet moulded for an answer? In short, would you choose one who, at sight of trees and spires seeming to fly by him as the wherry passes, would begin to talk of parallax, and, when the boat was in danger of being hurried down the weir, of epicycles,—one who has ever on his tongue,

"Tropic, colures, the equinoctial,
The zodiac, poles, and line ecliptical,

The nadir, zenith, and anomalies,
The azimuth, and ephimerides,"

—one who, without grace or humour, requires you to look at every thing with scientific eyes, having strange words to be used for commonest things,—one who would shake his head if he heard you repeat the remark of Pascal, that "the heart has reasons of its own, of which reason knows nothing;" or, in short, would you like to have with you a formal, a silly unhappy creature who at every turn shows himself a dry purblind pedant, a descendant in right line from the virulent generation of verbal critics, a grave magisterial personage, who would never understand your jokes or accommodate himself to any one else's humour? In brief answer, and to speak in an elegant popular way, I would say, "It ain't likely." Why, even off the river, "he who, to recommend a companion, says a great poet," says at the same time, "a great embarrassment." It is the remark of Jules Janin. Well, if even that prove alarming, what would it be if he had said, "great politician, great writer of leading articles; the Ne plus ultra, by the way, now of literature, or great contractor for the repair of public opinion; great echo of the scientific journal?" How would you relish such company, in which

"No book for delight
Must come in your sight,
But instead of fine plays
Dull Sophists' essays?"

My conviction is, that in such an emergency you would find yourself suddenly very much engaged at home; that your reply, without absolutely compromising truth, would be somewhat to this effect, "Thank you, but I'd rather not; pray excuse me for to-day. I must proceed with what I am about, or I may never be able to put the finishing hand to it." The personage in question, at all events, even though he should overhear some compliment to his address, like that of the "nice young maid" in our merry song,

"You're a perfect cure,
A cure, a cure, a cure,"

will have no right to complain, being himself accustomed no only to slight or neglect the least sacrifice to the wish of others but to esteem very little the sort of thing generally proposed t them. In fact, he is not inclined, if he could have his way, t allow any one a walk out at all, much less to go out for th day. "My uncle," says Pliny, "once reproved me for goin to take a walk. 'You might,' said he, 'employ those hours t more advantage;' for he thought every hour lost that was no given to books." Let us suppose for a moment that you hav him actually in the boat with you, like a bear as he is.

> "Ah! vraiment nous y voici,
> Reprit l'ours à sa manière,
> Comme me voilà fait? Comme doit être un ours,
> Qui t'a dit qu'une forme est plus belle qu'une autre?
> Est-ce à la tienne à juger de la notre?"

Whatever you may be prepared for in the way of annoyance I promise you that such a companion will fully satisfy you expectations; "but for my part," as Ulysses says of Ajax, "I am satisfied that a man of this sort should stay within doors, or if for a while with us, that he should view, behold, survey or see—his way to be gone. There would be not the slightest use in trying to persuade him to enter into our feelings, and therefore it is best to leave him quietly to himself and to his own feelings, such as they are, without being ourselves in the least discouraged by his disparagement of what we have a liking for since, after all, as Rivarol said, what could good sense do in a age sick with science, if happiness, such as we are now on the point of realizing, were not permitted to present itself without the proofs that this individual would be sure to demand? So then, as with Chaucer's young clerk of Oxford, let twenty books at his bed's head be his companions and his music.

> "For him was lever hav at his beddes head
> Twenty bokës, clothëd in blak or red,
> Of Aristotle and his philosophie
> Than robës riche, or fidel, or sautrie *."

What a precious little cure it must have been! I declare positi

* Chaucer.

tively my conviction that we all, both male and female, are more disposed to take with us some one of whom possibly a censor of that kind would say, as Madame du Fresnoy predicated of M. Fontanes, that he had the 'l'air vaurien,' which, for all his sneers, not unfrequently belongs to a right good fellow, one in whom is found greatness of heart and nobility of nature.

But, come now, don't be supposing us worse than we are. I do assure you it is not our intention to speak disparagingly of learning or of that taste for literature which often, as we have so lately observed, throws such an additional charm over our serenest hours, while it can render us, for a moment or two, forgetful of grief, or half insensible to deepest wounds during those intervals which are unhappy. What natural and agreeable characters, what "regular bricks" are some men of considerable reading, who are no more spoiled by their erudition, with a Homer in their pocket, than is a young artist by having his sketch-book under his arm, or a musician by carrying about his flute or his cornet! How many have we known to each of whom might have been applied the poet's lines—

> "A youth was there, of quiet ways,
> A student of old books and days,
> To whom all tongues and lands were known,
> And yet a lover of his own;
> Books were his passion and delight,
> And in his upper room at home
> Stood many a rare and sumptuous tome
> In vellum bound, with gold bedight,
> Great volumes garmented in white,
> Recalling Florence, Pisa, Rome."

Look even at Patru, for instance, as painted by Sainte-Beuve. There were two men in this character. "By the side of that Patru, Ciceronian and solemn, there was this Patrou, familiar, amusing, the last man in the world that could remind you of a pedant, but one full of merry sayings and innocent fun*." It is true however that at least of French moralists, as M. de Sacy remarks, "the best, those that will be always read, as never

* Causeries du Lundi, v.

falling into commonplace, were for the most part persons who were not men of letters by profession. They had read the ancients, but they had no tint of pedantry, nothing about them of that odour of the study." Yet it is not the study, the thinking-shop, as Aristophanes calls it, that is to blame. Why should it produce such different effects from any other workshop, from which no one is thought the worse of for coming, though it be in his shirt sleeves, with both himself and his clothes full of it? Neither is the fault in the employment of reading in itself, or in the thoughts which are to be worked out. "It is metaphysicians," says the same elegant author, taking an extreme case, "and not metaphysics, that frighten us. It is the formidable array of words, and the frightful air which metaphysicians have given to their science, that repel. A book of metaphysics well drawn up would be the most amusing of all books." That is going very far, no doubt; but certainly a man might be occupied with philosophic reflections and with learning, and yet be no more spoiled by it all, or unfitted for accompanying such parties as we are considering, than if he had been painting all the morning, or glazing windows, or working as apprentice under a carpenter. Indeed, without recurring to all that we observed before, to see proof that these literary tastes are not necessarily incompatible with the object proposed to us during such rambles as ours, we have only to look to the recent work of M. de Sacy himself. "Assuredly," he says, "I am neither a great critic nor a great scholar, but I love letters, I love them passionately;" and one of us might have added, that he makes others love them. "It is a feeling," he continues, "almost born with me. As far back as ever I can remember, the mere sight of a good book, much more its perusal, has delighted and transported me. I could never say all the charm which a taste for books and letters has shed over my life, or the strength I derive from it during intervals of discouragement. How often has a single hour's reading reanimated me and restored me to myself! In the first months which followed the revolution of 1848, when all Paris appeared transformed into an immense forum, and there seemed to be no action left for a lover of his country, how happy I was to find myself with Horace or Montaigne, and pass a serene hour with them! In

better times I never went out on a fine day without a book. Whether I opened it or not, it was with me."

Who objects to all this, which can recall those lines of Johnson,

> "His force of genius burn'd in early youth,
> With thirst of knowledge and with love of truth;
> His learning, join'd with each endearing art,
> Charm'd ev'ry ear, and gain'd on ev'ry heart?"

As soon as Fouquet fell into trouble, all the world, excepting some people fond of books, and songs, and noble thoughts, and romantic tales, and tragedies, abandoned him. There was found among his papers, poor fellow, a long list of supposed friends, comprising half the court, as being persons on whom he thought he could for ever fully count; but only one of these fine characters came to his assistance then, while Pelisson, Mlle. de Scudéri, Brébeuf, Corneille, Racine, and La Fontaine, gave proofs of their attachment to him *. Are we to dislike then a class of persons capable of such fidelity? Rather I would ask, what young man or woman would not be delighted at the prospect of having such a companion, or of having experienced such results as Johnson speaks of from a passionate cultivation of the same tastes? All this at least is more than two thousand leagues from the odour of a pedant. Such a man might have said a great deal more about books, and his love of books, without offending us or causing us to yawn or abate one jot of our ardour to take him along with us, through affection for his character. For any thing we were likely to care about in the way of dislike, he might have gone on to talk like Frederick the young collegian, saying,

> "——— Who laughs at me?
> Go, I will root here if I list, and talk
> Of rhetoric, logic, Latin, Greek, or any thing,
> And understand 'em too. Who says the contrary?
> Yet, in a fair way, I contemn all learning,
> And will be as ignorant as he, or he,
> Or any taffata, satin, scarlet, plush,
> Tissue, or cloth o' bodkin gentleman."

* Hist. du Donjon et du Château de Vincennes.

So far then from being frightened at the boasts with which h began, I would say, provided all else be right in them, the mo such fellows we can find to join our party on the river or th heath, the better; for let them have read ever so much, ther has been something to counteract the disagreeable effect of doing nothing but reading day after day. "It is," as a great autho remarks, "that they have two eyes in their head, which are no always employed in reading; and looking out into the world around them, they are compelled to acknowledge that men an things are not always exactly what these writers have tol them." No, we say with the French poet,

——— "Je hais seulement
La science et l'esprit qui gâtent les personnes.
Ce sont choses de soi qui sont belles et bonnes;
Mais j'aimerois mieux être au rang des ignorants,
Que de me voir savant comme certaines gens."

It is these certain people treating us and all our proceeding with the seriousness of the plenipotentiaries of the congress of Munster that we demur to. It is to the man who shows himself either as the pedant often afflicted with what M. Saint-Marc de Girardin calls the "préoccupation maladive du moi," or the mere quintessenced unmixed critic. In the latter capacity we shall speak of him anon; in the former we must begin by protesting against his admission amongst us as ineligible. If you ask the reason, we might stand on our reserve, and, as he is rather disposed to be troublesome, for

"He loves to be bitter at
A woman illiterate,"

only say "that he does not suit;" that he would in some sort "impedire," as the barber said when disguised like a canon lawyer, "This is my sentence, this I pronounce;" he would be "justum impedimentum." There is always danger for every one when we have to do with the self-love of your man of letters contracting symptoms of the pedantic disease, and when we are confronted with his nervous irritability, continually kept sharpened by the nature of his employment. Perhaps, indeed,

the answer we ought to venture on would be to refer him to some fair one steering or presiding, and say,

> "Et ne voulant savoir le grec ni le latin,
> Elle n'a pas besoin de Monsieur Trissotin,"

or simpler still, in order to induce him to leave us of his own accord, we might have recourse to a yawn on hearing his name proposed; for to say the truth, as Jules Janin remarks, "a good, clear, sonorous, and elegant yawn, is sometimes a great protection. In vain, through charity, through pity, through respect, you wish to restrain yourself. Useless effort! Neither the rank, nor name, nor quality of the visitor, can help you out of it. Gil Blas yawned at the homilies of his archbishop; Elmire at the declarations of Tartuffe; Lindor at the glances of Madame d'Escarbagnas; Corneille at the Mirame of Cardinal Richelieu,—a whole people, that people outraged and insulted by Nero, the crowned actor, yawned at the declamations of Nero, its emperor. It is thus that one can escape from the boast of science, from the taste of pedants, from the exaggerations of the immoderate, and from the criticism of the subtle. So let each of them begin to star it as if in the provinces. Aye, that's it; go on; act the pedagogue, and the critic, and the reviewer, and the first-rate writer, and the superior-talented, well-informed individual; explain; lay down the law; cut right and left; make plenty of room for yourself; inveighing against this one, knocking up against that other; make noise enough; pull out even your own last article, and begin,—a little, small, stealthy yawn, scarce perceptible, will do justice to your noise, to your titles of honour, to your great talents, to your insolence, and to your pride*." But perhaps it will not be lost time if we endeavour to have a personage of this kind represented in his true colours, for a greater foe to his own enjoyment, as to that of others with whom he comes in contact, it would be hard to discover or conceive! "Of all the evils that make me shudder to think on," says the author last cited, "of all the tiresome bores that carry weariness and disgust with them, the most terrible, in my opinion, is the pedant! Oh! the truly unfortunate one! buried

* Jules Janin.

in these quagmires and marshes of books, decades, satires, eclogues, epilogues, metaphors, narratives, confutations, confirmations, dissemblances, comparisons, similitudes, sentences, examples, discussions, locutions, declamations, calculations, examinations! Good heavens! to look especially at England, where this malady is far more prevalent than in France, how much pedantry is there in the writing and reading public of our times! From some cause or other, almost every one at this moment writes and talks in a stilted way,—even when, as in the instance of De Quincey, he sets himself to attack pedantry; for that great man too for once caught it." Manners and temper in the regions of pretension seem every where, more or less, affected by the pedantries, and pomposities, and fooleries, which accompany the long exercise of what Dr. Parr called "petty archididaschalian authority." Every thing else runs a risk of being sneered at as so much French shallowness, or low English vulgarity; as Ben Jonson complained, "nothing is good that is natural; right and natural language seems to have no wit; that which is writhed and tortured is counted the more exquisite." Day after day one is constrained to breathe this atmosphere; one can't get rid of it even by throwing away books and newspapers. I should like to find a circle at present among grave, respectable, remarkable people, in which you would not be every minute reminded of what Euripides says, that those who have the finest flow of philosophic words, who seem to be very wise, and to talk with most talent, are often the greatest fools.

> *οὐδ' ἂν τρέσας εἴποιμι, τοὺς σοφοὺς βροτῶν*
> *δοκοῦντας εἶναι καὶ μεριμνητὰς λόγων·*
> *τούτους μεγίστην μωρίαν ὀφλισκάνειν* *.

In truth, under many different forms, it is the very spirit that animates our rejected one which renders the lives of so many people positively wretched, and, if they had not some nook or corner of the imagination to fly to, insupportable. It pursues us into every asylum, invades every sanctuary, and metamorphoses every thing that it comes near. It puts us out of conceit with the lecturer, with the preacher, with the church,

* Med. 1215.

with the congregation, sometimes with ourselves, in a bad, unhallowed way, even with human nature in an equally wrong way; and if we saw nothing else, we should be perfectly puzzled when we tried to account for there being such things as men at all; for there is nothing so opposed to that grace and natural dignity, without which one cannot recognize God's workmanship, as pedantry, nothing that renders man so absurd—not alone in literature and science, which might not concern us much, but in morals, in manners, and in religion. Other kinds of pride render people hateful; this, stultifying even their looks, so as to give them the expression of an Egyptian idol, makes them purely and grimly ridiculous; in fact, a kind of prodigy unlike any thing else in the creation, inviting both laughter and displeasure at the same time, two guests of great incompatibility of temper. What can be done with such worthies in a boat, or in a garden, or any where, in short? since, in whatever place we be, attend we must to the learned men; they think we neglect them else; and then we must take heed to our grammar and our logic; we must render causes, know our canons and our divisions, degrees, and differences. It should be deemed on these occasions advisable to secure the absence of such examiners,—the river and the garden would say so decidedly. Pedantry involves a whole world. There can be even children pedants; and in allusion to them a charming French author says, "Faults of the mind are dangerous, because they become later vices of the heart. You see a child that is only a child." You might fancy that he was drawing the portrait of one I know, heir to an English dukedom. "He is laughing, expansive, abandoned to the present moment, the sport of every wind. He plays, he whistles, he sings, he cries; he is good, simple, true; he loves and is loved; he is grateful; he desires friendship, and not praise; he does not flatter in order to be flattered. All the world is his own, because he gives himself to all the world. Happy and noble lad! Whereas, on the contrary, the pedant young gentleman, whom we all have the misfortune to see every day, is calm, composed; he would scorn to be amused, or to laugh, like other children. Others are carelessly dressed, negligent. The pedant is clad in the fashion of man at ten years of age. He goes to balls with his mother,—talks politics

and philosophy, and is already a lost child. Others, on the co trary, remaining children, soon overtake him as they grow u and their youth has gained what their childhood has not lo The pedant child has lost his childhood without benefit to h youth; and the childhood which he disdained at nine he wi find at fifty, but it will be a childhood sad and ridiculous. T pedant, from not having begun with the beginning, produces n fruit; he remains in a sad medium state which is neither scien nor ignorance. How many evils from having renounced th most charming age of life*!" But it is in the more ordina sense of the term that pedantry comes across us now; and f from it we must, or meet it. But after all, why fly like all th rest of them? I say, Jack, Tom, Harry, do you care much f these sour, demure-looking dons, that are every minute inte posing to stop us?—Not a snap, I think I hear them rep Well then, wheel round and charge to flutter their battalio We shall later be in trouble for it no doubt, but far the more w shall enjoy ourselves and find peace.

Let us rest on our oars then a moment, slide to the bottom the boat, and consider what only your literary and metaphysi pedant is; and that not from a desire of exposing any indiv dual to ridicule, but from a prudent desire to preserve ourselv not alone from what is disagreeable, but from what is danger ous; for we have cause to pry into them, as Hortensia say "Pedantry," some one remarks, "proceeds from much readin and little understanding." So Iacomo says of one affected wit it,

> "——— He has been much given
> To reading, till much poring night and day,
> And defying spectacles, made him book-blind.
> He walks, and thinks he is wise, and talks upon
> His old stock ———."

In a moral sense such is often the result of assiduous study Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes; and this it i that spoils so many weak constitutions, trusting themselves t sophists, fellows of outside, mere bark. After making so many ungainly sallies into learned regions without a call upon subject

* J. Janin, La Semaine des trois Jeudis.

the most alien, you will have plenty of very desirable persons meeting you, who, instead of being pleased, can only say with Barker,

> "——————— I am not taken with
> Your mighty nonsense, glean'd from heathenish books,
> Which leave a curse upon the author for 'em."

Moreover, there are graver reasons still for believing in a certain disaccordance between such characters and the object involved in all our excursions. Let us hear what Hazlitt remarks on this point. "Mutual kindnesses," saith he, "beget mutual attachment; and numberless little local occurrences in the course of a long intimacy furnish agreeable topics of recollection, and are almost the only sources of conversation among common persons. They have an immediate pleasure in each other's company. But in mere literature nothing of this kind takes place . . . . . Ideas assume the place of reality, and realities sink into nothing. Actual events and objects produce little or no effect on the mind, when it has been long accustomed to draw its strongest interests from constant contemplation. Cicero ceased to mourn for the loss of his daughter, when he recollected how fine an opportunity it would afford him to write an eulogy to her memory. The insensibility of authors to domestic and private calamities has been often carried to a ludicrous excess. After all, compared with the genuine feelings of nature 'clad in flesh and blood,' with real passions and affections, conversant about real objects, the life of a mere man of letters and sentiment appears to be at best but a living death; a dim twilight existence; a sort of wandering about in an Elysian field of our own making; a refined, spiritual, disembodied state, like that of the ghosts of Homer's heroes, who would gladly have exchanged situations with the meanest peasant upon earth*." If such were to be the effects of reading, methinks no one in a sane mind would follow your habit of life; "though books, for which indeed we might now substitute journals, should be sold in bushels in Cheapside, and come, like the peascods, wain-loads full." A man whose head has been inflamed with reading some leading

* Round Table.

article about the amazing progress of knowledge, and the nece sity for keeping pace with the age, and who has been goin through a course of lectures, and passing examinations f weeks together, is not of necessary consequence likely to prov a pleasant companion on a May morning for lads or demoiselle of our quirk. Vauvenargues, though the friend of Voltair would not set much value on all this knowing a little of ever thing; for, as we said before, it comes to that with the mos advanced of them for all their abominable airs. No age ha been without men who knew a great deal with a very moderat genius, and whose superficial science only served to conten their vanity. Even mere airs of gravity and of the old wisdo will not go down with us any better. It seems, perhaps, ov bold to talk of rejecting even a man like one whom Cicer praises; and yet, who on earth, of a different genus, woul really like to have in the boat with him, as a companion, one very ordinary metal, of whom you could say, "Quanta severit in vultu! quantum pondus in verbis! quam nihil non con sideratum exibat ex ore!" Or what would you think of havin with you one like the poet Attius, who would not rise whe Julius Cæsar entered the college of poets, judging himself hi superior in that branch, and who, being very diminutive in stature, caused to be erected in the temple of the muses a statu of himself of all but colossal size? Or should you like to have for your companion on a fine day a man of the type of Ber nardine de St. Pierre, who caring the most of all things for the happiness of men in general, would never take the least troubl to promote the pleasure or comfort of those who are at his side? "What? ask me about my friend," cried a modern Utopist, "and you do not ask me about my ideas!" That's what these men value; though, if you will only wait to hear their 28thly in support of the latter, you may be yourself ranked by them on a par with the former. "Gracious heavens!" exclaims Balzac, "how many serious fools there are in the world! fools that trust to reason! fools disguised as philosophers! Oh, how much better the silence of the sanctuary than the Babel of the academy!" Oh, these long-winded monsters, who are enough to make us pagans, again invoking Hercules to come down, and though he should make it up his thirteenth labour, to rescue us

from this hydra of discourse here! What a glorious age is at hand!—for they wind up with exclamations—and how will all men that are not now in their cradles be left behind! "Possibly," replies Vauvenargues, "there will be a great progress in some respects, and what we know at present may be nothing to what will be known. But those who pass us by, and who believe themselves so superior in regard to knowledge, will not be in the least better by the heart." Their precursors won't much like giving that turn to the subject. But in the mean while there seems nothing, at all events, very barbarous in our proposition, when we say that for a day's pleasure, accepting his words in their literal sense, we are rather for having, as our friend the nigger says, "de book of destruction of useless knowledge;" and that we don't like to have with us one that every moment, and for each word we utter, will be "looking encyclopædias at us," perhaps like another Sosibius, that admirable solver of difficulties, as Athenæus calls him, giving us his "speculations on the source of the Hampstead ponds, or some observations on the theory of tittle-bats;" or calling our attention to his statistical tables, and, to the horror of Jules Janin, if he were of the party, telling us the product clear of a sum of one hundred and fifty-seven pounds three farthings, with the interest of seven and a quarter per cent. accumulated during three thousand seven hundred years and one quarter of an hour; or how much the hundred and forty millions six hundred and sixty-four thousand seven hundred and fifty acres, of which the kingdom of France is composed, ought to produce. But whatever be the subject, there is nothing pleasant, or fresh, or fit for the river or the garden to listen to in the minds and mouths of pedants. See the poor unhealthy creatures limping, as fast as they are able, after the kind of authors or journalists that have the property to attract spirits of their class,—such, to name but one out of a multitude, though he is rather gone by now, to make room for worse, as Mr. Locke, so well calculated to make them all living proofs that logic is what one might well call in the French way the fool of the house,—"la folle de la maison!" He that can make any thing of such talk will be able to explain the treatise by Plutarch on the demon of Socrates, and to get out easily, without having once laughed, from any labyrinth. Richard of St. Victor seems to suppose that the

Divine Wisdom recognizes the distaste which most of us fee for dry and abstract books, and that it condescends to make ou lessons short and light, as if, even in a way of literature, it wer best to do so. "The human mind," he says, "dazzled by th multifarious spectacle of visible things, is with difficulty renewe to the simple contemplation of spiritual goods, unless it b taught with the variety of celestial doctrine and the diversity of readings. Therefore not alone is the whole of Holy Scriptur beautifully divided into books, but each book is distinguished by the division of diverse significations, in order that the mind may be led more readily to the love of the true good *." This is not however, the way that pedants adopt when they seek to enlighten others; and truly, as the humorous song complains,

"In one way and de oder
We get lectured well enough."

But can we wonder that men should ignore the debt for which such superstitious lovers of the purely intellectual and obscure think to hold them responsible? As with regard to those of quality, so with the pedant's notions of quantity, it is but very natural and proper for people to demur. "In truth," as Balzac says, "the monosyllables of the wise are worth more than many chapters and paragraphs, distinctions, and divisions and subdivisions." "If we must choose between evils, give me," he adds, "the least. I prefer the little pocket volumes that have vogue in France, which you can carry about with you, to the folio volumes which come from other countries in waggons to block up our libraries." Are we or are we not, as Pope says,

"Launch'd on the bosom of the silver'd Thames?"

Well, if we are afloat on its tranquil waters, let us then have the courage to own that it is quite enough "to know a thing or two," and that we can get on very well without much learning.

"Something I know just nothing about,
I was years finding all that out."

Most of us are in the age when happiness is wanted more than universal knowledge. We have no one with us to cry out like Philamente,—

* In Apocalyps. lib. ii. Prol.

"Quoi! monsieur sait du grec! ah! permettez de grâce
Que pour l'amour du grec, monsieur, on vous embrasse."

We like to have a young fellow among our pals who knows Greek well because his father wished him to know it, or as Macilente says, who understands the Greek for society's sake; but we don't want to have with us in these rambles one of your learned and authentic fellows that gives himself out with great airs for a wonderful scholar of any sort, or generally for what is here understood by a "reading man," like the Reverend Walter Monoculus, the travelling tutor, as described by an amusing author, who would be interrupting one each moment with Armado's injunction, "Define, define, well-educated infant." On these occasions, as Cicero says, we would often rather hear jesting on the banks a quoit than such a philosopher; and we would with all the glee in the world, leave him disputing "de maximis rebus et gravissimis," to strip for a good rowing-match or a swim to the other shore, or a conversation like one of ours, which, in regard to pretensions, is not worth more than either. The philosopher even, Marcus Antoninus, returns thanks to the gods for having prevented him from attaining to a greater proficiency in rhetoric and poetry and other studies, which perhance he says might have been an injury to him if he had had great success that way; and he ascribes it to Heaven and to his good fortune that when he went on to philosophize he had not fallen into the hands of any sophist, or wasted his time in commentaries and syllogisms and idle discussions. Whether he went right or wrong to the end, is a question that does not concern us here, but it is certain that our river kings will so far cordially agree with this emperor. Moreover, as already suggested, your pedant is often a quarrelsome, fiery person, who kindles at a spark. Therefore Socratic philosophers, as distinguished from orators, were said to address themselves to the learned, whose mind had more need of being appeased than incited—"quorum sedare animos malunt quam incitare." The Romans called some one inapt or 'non aptus,' and Cicero says, "Omnium autem ineptiarum, quæ sunt innumerabiles, haud scio an nulla sit major, quam, ut illi solent, quocumque in loco, quoscumque inter homines visum est, de rebus aut difficillimis aut non necessariis

argutissime disputare*." It would never do to turn our bo
or our bower, or our flowery bank into a kind of Greek scho
by propounding matters that, even when not pernicious, ten
one only constitute some most high and mighty nonsense. I
them be ever so solid, why "you will undo me with your qu
tions," as the excellent Agatho says, "and your new fashio
always talking at an unseasonable time†." For the truth
people like ourselves cannot for the life of them be brought
comprehend how it should be useful for them to keep up co
versation with such well-informed talkers, instead of heari
them in silence, or not listening to them at all, while amusi
themselves with other matters. If it be well, as Balzac says
civilize letters in sending them from college, and delivering th
from the hands of pedants who spoil, and soil, and abuse the
in the sight of all the world, how much more necessary for u
at least, is it to free our sunny hours from such perversion
the best things? The "précieuses," purists, or whatever sh
be the right English word for them, like him to whom Fo
alludes in the lines—

> "He aim'd at purity in all he said,
> And never once omitted eth or ed,"

who, in every thing precise and rigidly demure, will be l
Armado for anatomizing in the vulgar. O base and obsc
vulgar! every simple word that we can utter, and esteem
only what is very grave, despise us, of course, for all this.
some one in an old play says, addressing a person that seems
be of their category,

> "——————— You do imagine,
> No doubt, you have talk'd wisely, and confuted
> London past all defence ———."

Although, perhaps, we might retort upon you declaiming on
vices, and say with Fiametta,

> "The bells rung backwards, or the mandrake's cry;
> Wolves howling at the moon, the screech-owl's dirge;

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* De Oratore, ii. 12. † Athen. x.

The hyen's voice, the groans of parting souls,
Added to these what is in nature killing
To the ear, is not more fatal than thy tongue,
When it is bent on mischief ———."

And how often is it so bent! How often, after reading some treatise on the antiquity of man, or merely after hearing about some old jug found in a bed under the Nile, or some tree in a preadamite forest that a navvy's hatchet had lopped some three weeks before, does it even hope to cry down Moses, as if he had engaged to tell us all about the first world that ever was made! When it affects to be amusing, perhaps, it is not much better; for, as Leigh Hunt observes, citing the instance of Spinoza, who thought amusing the freaks of spiders, "the risibilities of the serious are not always to be accounted for*." "Pray don't," said Sheridan to Lord Lauderdale, when the latter offered to repeat some good thing; "a joke in your mouth is no laughing matter." So it is with the pleasantry of our Barbon. One has to exclaim then, like Speed, "O jest unseen, inscrutable, invisible, as a nose on a man's face, or a weathercock on a steeple!" Nothing delicate or genial, nothing subtle or urbane in that jest, you may be quite sure. Neither can you ever depend much upon such friends for helping you at a moment of need, or for sympathy when you want it. De Thou tells us gravely, and without appearing ashamed of himself, that on occasion of a tumult in Paris, finding an officer stationed at the Pont Saint-Michel, and being told by him that it would be wise to make the best of his way home, he followed the advice and gave up his intention of proceeding to see his wife's relation, D'Auxy de la Tour, who had been just carried wounded into a wine-shop; and a year later, when he relates the loss of his furniture, he quite as gravely assures us that he bore it more patiently than the loss of two young friends who were killed at the same time†. Such narratives and avowals in any one else, at least, would be very characteristic of the genus that we are objecting to. The fact is, "they're a nasty lot," as I once heard an English sailor qualify the Chinese. Your poor

* Wit and Humour, 39.
† Ad an. 1588 et 1589.

fast juveniles can only yawn and say like Atalanta, though n exactly inspired by love for one of them,

"———— utinam velocior esses!"

They remind one of another, who in his slow pedantic w courting the muses, produced the catastrophe of which we re somewhere; for it is said that a king of Persia was told by diviner that he would die in yawning. Endless precautio were accordingly taken to remove from him every thing th could induce weariness. At last a poet was admitted, w proceeded to repeat before him one of his new pieces. T king yawned and died; the poet was put on his trial. In v he proved that he had followed all the rules of poesy and best models; he was condemned. On the scaffold he w ordered to repeat the fatal poem. The judges could not h laughing at it. The sentence was accordingly reversed, and t poet allowed to go free on the ground that the piece was t ridiculous, with all its "regularity," to have been the cause the king's yawn.

But let us observe how our aspirant is painted by a mast hand, and then you will better be able to judge whether d carding even the higher interests against which he at le indirectly militates, and having only in view the enjoyment a serene hour, we need not free our own minds from such a d case, and our party from such a comrade. Balzac descri "le Barbon" in these terms: "The first thing he did on h return from college was to give the lie in form to his fath and mother, and to contradict them even when they were his opinion, for fear it should be thought that he was of thei To agree to any thing did not seem to him to suit the digni of a philosopher; and he thought that, above all, he shou depart from common sense, for that only rare things ought to esteemed. The word 'common' disgusted him so thorough that he seems thenceforth to have resolved on having no sens and on leaving that vulgar quality to persons of no mer Having thus got rid of the chief part of the human understan ing, he accepted what was least credible for what was m beautiful. He had all the fierceness of the school: spoke ev of the natural empire of the sage, of the sovereignty of reas

and of the omnipotence of syllogism. His poor intellect, spoiled by Latin and Greek, did not get better by a course of logic. It was that which placed him in the number of incurables. It entered his head by the breach, and overthrew him from the first blow. Since then he has employed the art of reasoning only to defend his folly, and that of speech only to make himself unintelligible. What confusion and darkness! Chaos was an image of the mind and doctrine of the Barbon. He has wherewithal to cite beside the question for fifty years together. Every thing that enters his head gets corrupted, as in a sewer of the university; the place is so infected that sound opinions, if they remain ever so short a time there, become heresies, though no one can accuse him, because no one can distinguish in what he says the affirmative from the negative. His mind acknowledges no jurisdiction but that of heaven, and derives its light immediately from God." It is a good commentary on the above passage, though it may put some admirers of Lord Bacon out of humour, to cite the words of Richard of St. Victor, saying, like one of our juveniles, of either sex, as far as the thought is concerned, "We learn many things by experiment which we never could learn by investigation or reading: little after all, and little certain is that science which the experience of things does not assist and confirm *." As it is, admitting that what has been represented presents only an extreme case, there is often a great difference between a doctor or clever writer and a reasonable animal. When he comes to tease us with his sardonic laugh, grimmer than a frown, with his dull ridicule, or his pretentious "utterances," as Carlyle calls them, the best reply for us is to say with Fowler,

> "—— Prithee, Satire, choose another walk,
> And leave us to enjoy this;"

or with Treedle,

> "In troth, sir, I remember some such things; but
> I have forgotten them."

Perhaps, if we had to make a clean breast of it, we should have

* De Eruditione Hominis interioris, ii. c. 18.

to confess that at least two hundred times a day, we forget t
think of any thing whatsoever. But in reality, as we are wit
friends, I venture to say that half the serene enjoyment of ou
Thames or green-wood hours, consists in this sort of forgetful
ness, in the fact of our having lost for the moment all memor
of a hundred things that plague us elsewhere; in our having n
books of useful knowledge with us, or newspapers, or reviews
the cleverest possible, or people who would be every minute fo
turning over their books or their literary papers, bringing thei
pen and ink-horn to the boat, and perhaps if they pick up a scra
of rather awkward writing, saying to us, "This is your hand
these be your very 'c's,' your 'u's,' and your 't's,' and thus, i
contempt of question, make you your great 'p's.'" As Chaucer
host exclaims, addressing the clerk of Oxenford,

> "For Goddis sake! as beth of better cheere,
> It is no time for to study here."

Well, I know what will be your answer. For your stock
knowledge, sir, why, give God thanks and make no boast of it
and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there i
no need of such vanity. It must be kept in mind besides, tha
the pedant is not alone tiresome, insipid, and ridiculous, bu
often to a certain degree, as we have just suggested, intellectuall
dangerous, so prone are we all to fall in with his way of dispa
raging, and to listen to whatever depreciates the best things
even while we laugh at his way. And in truth, a scholar of thi
kind, as Carlo calls him, "a rank, raw-boned anatomy," gene
rally, as he says, "walks up and down like a charged musket
no man dares encounter him." Balzac, like Erasmus in hi
celebrated Ciceronianus, on which Gibbon makes such just re
flections *, meets him on the sacred ground of liturgical criticism
where he broaches "these impertinent affectations for whic
our Ciceronians would not be acknowledged by their Cicero.
"As for you," he continues, "who are not Cicero, pardon m
if I say you are wrong to try to pass off for a stranger amongs
us. It seems to me, in matter of Latin, that you ought not t
be more delicate than Cardinal Sadolit and the Jesuit Maffe

* Miscel. v. 260.

They both belonged to the two Romes; they wrote histories, and they read the Breviary. Such men prove that there are still at Rome Romans of this kind. There are men among our priests and prelates who would find their place in the ancient republic among the knights and senators. But these true and legitimate Romans know how to distinguish times and things; they do their duty at the altar, and they follow their fancy in the cabinet. When they pray and sacrifice their eloquence does not trouble their devotion. Their attention is not distracted by bad Latin, even to call it so for the sake of pleasing you; though the truth is, they recognize it in respect to such terms for a new language, which religion has consecrated, and which Cicero himself, if he could come back to life, would be the first to admire." After citing certain verses of Randolph, constructed in the mediæval style, an accomplished English scholar and poet says, "There is something very charming in those Latin rhymes. They make one wish—in spite of the danger of being charged with a Gothic taste—that Horace and Catullus, say rather Ovid, had written in rhyme as well as blank verse, and so given us a fairy music with some of his words, beyond the power of his lutes and lyres to hand down *." This classical scholar almost wishes that Horace and Ovid had learned somewhat from our liturgical poets of the middle ages, whom your pedant is for scorning. Perhaps, however, at least as far as the last poet is concerned, it is just as well as it is, since he can do harm enough without any fresh charm being added; but this is finding an agreement with Balzac's view in a quarter where we could have hardly expected it. "As for your sneers about ignorance," continues that former author, "to show you by an authentic example that God takes in good part the incongruities which come from a good soul, I can make you see when you like, in an approved relation, that He has wrought great miracles with three ungrammatical words. He who pronounced them did not understand them; he used them even in a counter sense; he took the negative for the affirmative; he uttered a curse instead of a blessing. But these maledictions were rectified by his innocence; and God responded to the

* Leigh Hunt, Wit and Humour, 215.

heart of the just, and not to the words of the ignorant. After that be scandalized at the ignorance of priests 'who can hardly read, and still less deliver an oration.' I tell you again, what you term the ignorance of the minister, even were he as ignorant as you fancy, does not affect the ministry; the purity of the thing is preserved amidst improper words and vicious locutions. Religion is there sound and whole in all this disorder of grammar and violation of rules and precepts. A superior virtue is mixed up with it all, and the whole is brought to perfection."

But it remains to consider this character under another not very charming form, and to describe one who, if not the brother, is at least cousin-german to the last, and equally ineligible, as far as our sort of company is concerned; one that I must entreat you to take a very particular knowledge of, and with more than ordinary respect, Master Fast, lest by a little freedom of speech on your part you get us all into trouble.

We must begin with the same caution as we exercised on commencing our defence for rejecting the pedant. That there is a time and a place for good sound criticism, is a proposition that none of our simple people would wish to deny. The part of a critic well understood is a part as great as that of a Creator; and noble philosophic minds have done nothing else all their lives but criticize the ideas and prejudices of their times. As a keen observer says, that has sufficed not only to their glory, but to maintain the progress of their age; for all works of amendment are composed of two acts of the human will, of equal importance,—to overthrow and to build up again. The first is no doubt the easiest of the two; and the Collége de France, that school of high criticism, founded by Francis the First, has had no doubt of late for professors some learned men who, by means of it, seem to have rather impaired their wits. But an exquisite taste for all sorts of literature, an incredible love for truth, come from what hand or climate it will, an incorruptible justice in the distribution of blame and praise,—who must not admire such qualities? especially in these times, when we see how they are employed by men of vast erudition to vindicate the past, and defend what is maligned by the lettered vulgar, though almost of necessity dear to those who cultivate the

serene. "Do you ask for instance," demands the Prince Albert de Broglie, in his discourse before the French Academy; "do you ask what induced Lacordaire to turn his thoughts towards the monasteries, and no longer to see in their inmates either the victims of a domestic tyranny, or of grovelling superstition, or the lazy drones devouring the substance of the hive without taking part in the labour? To answer this question I have not to look to a distance, for the true culprits are before me. I am speaking in presence of the chief authors of an historical reform which will constitute one of the glories of our age. No institution of the past more than that of the religious orders, is under a greater obligation to the justice of that subtle and learned criticism of which I behold around me the representatives*." You see then how well such a spirit can be employed actually in the interest of tranquil hours in their concentration and perhaps most perfect state. Still, for all that, it is not at every turn that we like to find men showing off their critical discernment. There may be occasions, even off the river, and in the dismallest study in Christendom, when such an ambition would prove offensive, and moreover, notwithstanding the canons respecting citation laid down by learned men †, utterly useless. How many things, for example, may be cited, even by an author, ironically, or for some agreeable particularity in the style of the passage, or for some indirect testimony not expressed though involved in it, or for some other reasons which one has not time to specify, without our being in the least bound to express our conviction that, without reference to such accidents, but simply viewed in their direct historic character, they are not of any value! The effect of your critical discernment that ignores this would be to diminish the stock of pleasures, and information too, resulting from literature and from conversation. Whereas, the true spirit of criticism would leave us in both respects an almost boundless liberty to make the proper use of whatever comes across us, though that may be something very unlike what the critic is thinking of. Neither is such exact elegance in regard to language, as they require at all times, very desirable.

* Discourse, 26th Feb., 1863.

† Des Citations, Hist. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. iii. 112.

At least for common occasions it is better to follow the advice given by one of the ancients, with regard even to literary occupations. "Seek what you want to write or speak about, but not the manner how you are to do so. He whose style is very studied and polished is sure to have been occupied about little things. A great mind expresses itself more carelessly and confidently. The contrary over-refinement, and exactness, and elegance, concinnitas, is not a manly ornament *." Those who fell foul on the late letter of the Prince of Wales, when he so generously offered to befriend those who had suffered in the throng of Ludgate-hill on his triumphant entry, might have been reminded of this with advantage to themselves. They were reminded of it, but the critics would not print the communication. It used to be said of the first of this profession who in France seemed to possess the soul of his art, that he had never happened to meet with either a wicked man or a bad book. That is going very far, but it is a leaning in the right direction. "My natural foible," said even the implacable Jeffrey, in a letter to the poet Moore, "is to admire and be pleased too easily, and I am never severe except from effort and reflection †." With our views he would have made fewer efforts, though of course we would not altogether have had him banish reflection; though indeed we need not protest against the excess of lenity, since it is not likely to be epidemic. Even to a right leaning, or to an inexperience to justify it that might be very natural and judicious, there is no great probability of your professed, exact, curious, fine, exquisite, and even well-behaved critic being able to substantiate a claim. It is not, at all events, precisely as representing the true type of genius in this respect, as when Rivarol says, "a man of taste has received twenty wounds before inflicting one," that he comes forward here. We shall see in matters of least importance—for I shall not consider his more dangerous lunes, which are often really too portentous to laugh at—how he acquits himself; and it will be clear at once that he must step it elsewhere, let him turn to what occupation he will. He tells us perhaps that he has spare time like ourselves,

* Sen. Ep. 115.

† Mem. &c. of T. Moore, vol. ii. 101.

and plenty of leisure; and what should he do, he asks, if he were not to be criticizing, and speculating, and censuring, and cavilling, and pleading, and upsetting? and one is tempted to say to him in answer, why not employ it like serene-hours-loving folk in friendship-making, in making or in keeping some one fond of him? That's not exactly what he has a mind for, I rather think. But let us observe his qualifications a little nearer. Now the first thing that strikes simple people in him as not being particularly agreeable, is his pride. "Quantum a belluis homines," he says, "tantum distant a laicis litterati." Pretty modest this, methinks, for a beginning.

> "Le début n'est pas mal, et, contre le prochain,
> La conversation prend un assez bon train."

Nor can we thoroughly like even that phrase of a truly estimable writer of our day, who says on one occasion, "Ayons au moins l'aristocratie de la science." The spirit is still the same, you see. "Look," says Balzac, "at the vanity of the learned. Idomeneus was a prime minister, and Epicurus wrote to him in these terms, 'If you seek glory, all the grandeur of Persia cannot confer on you so much as my letters.' And Seneca, relating the words, not to be outdone, says to his own correspondent, 'What Epicurus promised his friend I promise you, Lucillus. I have credit with posterity.' Charles Dumoulin, who called himself the Doctor of France and Germany, used these words, 'Ego qui nemini cedo, et qui a nemine doceri possum.' Look at common people, and see the contrast. Surely a man without pride can say, 'I can play at quoits, or cricket, or at tric-trac; I have check-mated such a one; I can beat that one at foot-ball.' It seems to me that to speak like that is no great vanity; and this is all the boast of common mortals like myself."

But they are come to set us all right, and to expose mistakes, abuses, and so forth; they'll have an oar in every thing. They have come among us to enter upon "that present, daily, hourly war with error which is the sworn chivalry of knowledge." Well, here are then round about us, men of more ability in censure than we, whose wonderful judgments can give it a more satisfactory allowance. Of course we and "the like of us" are

a set of poor, mistaken creatures, that ought to have been born when King Pepin of France was a little boy, or at least four hundred years ago; but, for all that, it is not very pleasant to have perhaps at our elbow, when we go out for the day, one come to observe, who if he stays, it will be at our own peril, another Iago for companion, who, in his way, makes the same professions of superior knowledge, saying,

> "As I confess, it is my nature's plague
> To spy into abuses; and oft my jealousy
> Shapes faults that are not ———."

Their taste in this respect, you see, won't be confined to literature. Putting their tongues a little in their hearts, they chide with thinking; and indeed possibly their whole moral character may be depending somewhat upon the same principle as that which often directs them in that department, which fact would go far to justify the severe sarcasm of Rousseau, "Tout homme réflechi est méchant." A pretty thing, at all events, it would be if we could always know the subject of those reflections, which are peculiar to their race. There is one thing that they can't hide; for, clearly, they would be saucy controllers of our private steps, and they are bent always on slily observing the ludicrous or the weak in the deeds, words, and accents of their friends, the action of whose familiar style they affect to construe.

> "How will he scorn? how will he spend his wit?
> How will he triumph, jeer, and scowl at it?
> O what a scene of foolery for him,
> Of childlike madness, vanity, and whim!"

There has been such a man to pass disguised into parties like ours.

> "His was the subtle look and sly
> That, spying all, seems nought to spy;
> Round all the group his glances stole,
> Unmark'd themselves, to mark the whole."

"I only wish we had him here for once," as Oberon says; "he should not from this grove till we tormented him for this injury." In an intimacy with such a consummate judge of characters there is, besides, another obstacle to our own serenity, for, as a victim

remarks, "It is not possible to have such a man for your friend without your being held responsible for all his aversions and condemnations, and that would be sufficient to make you by degrees contract somewhat of his own austerity." Then, on other grounds, if we even leave such a one at home it is not well for us, since, when we want to go forth, as Menæchmus says, "he is ever detaining us, calling us back, asking us questions that it is not always so easy to answer at our start: Whither we are going? What matter we are about? What we are going to do? What we intend to be doing out of doors? In short, showing himself as a custom-house officer." He meets us every where, as a witty French author says, "under the disquieting form of a point of interrogation," and we must begin by explaining to him the who? the what? the where? the why? the how? and the when? of our excursion itself, as well as of the book that is to record it. If he accompany us, it is, of course, worse still; for, with no great matters to conceal, we resemble a little the fairies in Corbet's humorous old song,

> "A tell-tale in their company
> They never could endure;
> And whoso kept not secretly
> Their mirth, was punish'd sure."

The homely fact is, though pardon must be asked for using such a term, that on these occasions we want what some one calls your "say-nothing-to-nobody sort o' fellers." This counterpart to the latter, put what construction you will on our preference, is not a character to make us feel comfortable by his presence. We spoke before about requiring the freedom of youthful manners when people go forth to enjoy themselves; but it is quite clear that observers of this description, when they speak their mind, will not approve of such manners or proceedings. One of Shakspeare's sweet, natural characters warns a friend, accordingly, to be on his guard against such criticism, saying,

> "Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice;
> Parts that become thee happily enough,
> And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;

> But where thou art not known, why, there they show
> Something too liberal."

Indeed I find one very estimable writer, who will not be angry at seeing himself for a moment thrown into such company, confessing as much of himself; for in order to show how barbarous manners were in England 140 years ago, which, even without his genius, was not a difficult task, he cites, and I conceive rather unfortunately, an instance of this very freedom to prove his point, saying, "Fancy a noble lord calling out to his servants before the ladies at his table, 'Hang expense; bring us a ha'perth of cheese!'" I am afraid with persons not like him, but possessing constantly such fastidious ears, we all on the river, as well as the best society of the Faubourg St. Germain, may turn out to be no better than savages; and it is not exactly desirable that we should submit ourselves or our friends to the scrutiny of men who are likely to class us in such a category. What chance have we to come off well from an examination by men who will even perhaps insist on grammatical precision when they are themselves *in extremis*, as when the French critic, feeling himself dying, said to those present, "Je m'en vais ou je m'en vas! l'un et l'autre se dit ou se disent?"

But then they say that, in regard to knowledge, which, by the way, forms but an infinitesimal element in the cup of serenity, we are grossly deficient, that we are sheer ignoramuses, only unknowing bipeds, having for our most pardonable fault abundant stupidity. O thou Hercules of ignorance to cross them! They will prove by demonstrative reasons, and by arguments "in barbara," that we are, and never shall be any thing but animals; while they are, and will always be, doctors in "utroque jure." They are what they would compel us to be in all literary and scientific questions, into which they resolve every thing, however it may come across us—exact. Here's such a world of questions with them now! for they will be for playing the part of Ulpian in Athenæus, always picking out the thorns from what is said, and asking silly questions that no one cares to answer. Well, then, have at them with a downright blow, as Bevis of Southampton fell upon Ascapart. Yes; we object to your exact people, not because they are exact, they are not suffi-

ciently romantic to merit that appellation, but because cold-blooded mortals, one-sided and maimed intelligences, they are often, in point of fact, inexact where they are most assured, toiling to seem learned, to seem judicious, to seem sharp and conceited. Only listen, and every moment they will be saying like Polonius,

> "And I do think (or else this brain of mine
> Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
> As it hath used to do) that I have
> Found the very cause," &c. &c.

Certainly, to say nothing of the style of our own talk on these occasions, it would be amusing enough to read any mediæval, or even any popular work of the present day, and fancy to ourselves as we read it, what would be the kind of remarks that each incident and almost each expression would elicit from a modern critic of the pretentious school. It is not probable that we should agree with him, at least I hope none of our crew would consent to his views, but certainly the fun of the contrast, grave as he may esteem it, would be immense. Besides these, critics have often contracted the mania of a party or a cotérie, and when the coldest and most sedate are stung by that kind of fly, there is no excess, in the way of risk to others, as some one says, of which they are not capable. Then, let it beat against what sanctuary it may, who can stop the current of their quasi-learned declamation? which often renders each of them obnoxious to the charge of being less a heart and an intelligence caring for truth, than a temperament which seeks its gratification, a talent fasting, which searches for food every where; their English and Latin scholarships serve them only as artillery to thunder upon the poor common world. Yet, "to know how to be silent in English and to speak in Latin, requires tact, brother," as the dog Scipio says to his comrade dog Berganza. Who can wonder if any of our young peg-tops should say to them as in our old play?

> "——— I did expect
> Hard words, and do commend the pure discretion
> Of your most learned tribe, that think themselves
> Brave fellows when they talk Greek to a lady;

> Next to the Goth and Vandal, you shall carry
> The babble from mankind. Pray tell your fellows
> Learning is out of fashion in our garden."

Yes, it may possibly be even so; perhaps as far as that's concerned, we are only fit to keep company with that Abbé de Choisy who, relating his voyage and the rectification of the longitude which had to be made at the Cape, adds, "I was not altogether useless in the operation; for while the scientific men were at the telescope and the pendulums, I had to repeat 'one, two, three, four,' to mark the seconds." You may take note of this confession, and make what use of it you please; for, in short, serene hours have no more deadly enemy than the pride of science, which is the most obstinate of all passions. "The pride of science," says Lacordaire, "is the infatuation of a mind intoxicated with itself, that looks at itself in what it knows, like Narcissus gazing into his pool. It regards all limitation as an insult to its capacity, and expects to treat with God on an equal footing. It delights in raising difficulties, in finding a grain of sand that can be made a blasphemy to hurl at Heaven. Its knowledge is a kind of implacable duel between itself and God." Who could be serene or comfortable, or enjoy a fine day like other mortals, when under the influence of such a passion? Upon the whole, therefore, our sort of people are of St. Augustine's opinion, that he who has a fruit-tree and returns God thanks for it, without knowing either the elevation of its stem or the exact width of its branches, is better than one who knows the extent of the branches and the number of the leaves, without enjoying it or loving its Creator*.

But there are other demerits to make such persons quite ineligible here. They are for lowering every one you admire, thereby setting themselves in opposition to the ends of poetry,—pleasure and exaltation, without which there can be no chance of realizing any of our schemes of serenity. To be sure we all know that the sacred breath of a true poet can blow any virtuous humanity up to the stars; a pretty foolish thing, sooth, it is to be a poet; but however you may dislike a prodigal diffusion of apotheosis, this lowering of ideas is a miserable sort of trick,

* Conf. v.

nd a process easily learned; for, as Cicero says, "there is lmost no one who cannot more acutely and plausibly detect nd expose faults than see what is excellent." There's Aristotle, mere commonplace fellow; if you will hear some, Plato, a iscourser; Thucydides and Livy, tedious and dry; Tacitus, an ntire knot, sometimes worth the untying, very seldom; Homer, edious, prolix, talks of curriers and chines of beef; Virgil, of unging of land and bees; Horace, of I know not what. Why, nan, the greatest orators of old used to hear from their rivals hat their words were harsh, odious, and intolerable; that they ere themselves beasts. Even Demosthenes was accused of not eing able to speak Attically, and of being insipid and not orth listening to. We must plead guilty to a charge of liking ryden's style of criticism, who, with a disposition to be easily tisfied, was quick to discern the smallest glimpse of merit, and f preferring it infinitely to that which is said to be characteristic f "great men." However, without being very great perhaps in ny sense, our critical fellows now-a-days seem all made up of stidiousness; they can never look on the fair side of any thing. hen they are also for denying the common opinion respecting nown characters, to the positive injury of honest men. As I id, let us pass over in silence their crimes; let us only notice eir absurdities, though these are not harmless when viewed in nnexion, as they ought to be, with the animus which dictates eir criticism, and which is ever prompting them to break ose, to turn up and ravage the sweetest, holiest ground; and ough the instances may seem selected only for the diversion of e learned, they do but faithfully represent the kind of direction hich is given to their talk respecting the commonest themes f our daily conversation, and of which the sequel, or at least lterior tendency, is often evil of a worse kind than we are equired here to notice; since, as De Quincey well remarks, it as thus that a career of scepticism was opened upon Germany, hich from the very first promised to be contagious; for it was mode of revolutionary disease which could not by its very ature confine itself to Homer.

Now, in the first place, whether learned or unlearned, few can ke to be pierced through and through, as it were, each moment, nd in every sense, by the idea of one's next neighbour; though

I am aware a great proficient in the art of criticism consider that contingency one of the happy privileges of life in Paris No one, at all events, I should think, who is not a critic by profession downright, likes in a general way to have all commo respectable opinions respecting historical or even fabulous heroe wantonly set at nought, or to have to do with a set of poc creatures "taking pains to vulgarize their perceptions an diminish the amount of grace and joy*." I protest, at time the schoolmaster is exceeding fantastical. What a pity to hea Ben Jonson, after saying that he loved the man, express a wis that Shakspeare had blotted a thousand of his lines,—to hea him disparage Montaigne as a writer who presents his extract raw and undigested, and affirm that the speech which Plat made for Socrates is neither worthy of the patron nor the pers defended! Paradoxes of this kind are felt as a sort of defian hurled at every one present; and, as a witty poet says,

> "What use in life to make men fret,
> Part in worse humour than they met?"

To be sure, we have often no great personal interest in de fending the memories that are attacked; but still this sort talk is offensive, and irritative to the nervous system, howeve generally cool and good-natured one may be. Let us only he it a little. One speaker will affect, like Rosalind, to convin us, not wittily but gravely, that no one has ever died for lov saying, "Leander! he would have lived many a fair yea though Hero had turned nun, if it had not been for a hot mi summer night; for, good youth, he went but forth to wa him in the Hellespont, and, being taken with the cramp, w drowned; and the foolish chroniclers of that age found it was Hero of Sestos. But these are all lies." Another tries to shal your confidence in noble virtue, saying, with Olaus,

> "———— Alexander,
> Though he were great, was not so wise a gentleman
> As heaven, in that occasion, might have made him:
> The valiant confidence in his doctor might
> Have gnawn his bowels up, and where had been

* Leigh Hunt.

My gallant Macedonian? Come, you shall
Consider on't."

nother of the virulent progeny, thirsting for slander, fastens pon the reputation even of a fabulous personage. Here we eet an old acquaintance. The Barbon confesses that he used rmerly to think that Penelope had been a virtuous woman, ut he is now of a contrary opinion. He cites fable against ble, poet against poet, and Greek against Greek, to destroy e reputation of this poor princess. It is not alone after new inions that he hunts; he prefers those that are the most in- rious. Every one has heard of the Trojan wars; those that e learned in nothing else know all about them. You might well say that Dom Philippin killed in a duel the Marechal Créqui as to say that Hector got the better of Achilles in the ttle that terminated their quarrels. Well, for all that, our ctor has declared in favour of this last opinion. To oppose l Greek and Roman antiquity, he brings me forward a certain gyptian priest, whom he lit on by chance in a book that no e reads; and though an Egyptian prophet has been long a roverbial term for impostor and mountebank, he confides in m as in a man of great worth who would rather die than dis- ise the truth. He affirms, then, after this adamantine writer, at Achilles was killed by Hector,—that the Greeks made a eaty, raised the siege, and returned to their own country,— at after Priam's death Hector reigned for a long time in Asia, d, after attaining a great age, left the kingdom to his son amander. His corrections of history are of the same kind. ne word in Livy makes him believe, against the universal nsent, that the three Curiatii were Romans, and that an equi- cal term has put the Horatii in their place. So he says, iumphantly, your history has made a false step at the outset, d it is thus that all traditions can be traced. Such is the ay, he continues, thus getting the start of your Germans, at historical truth is served by those who call themselves its inisters. Another word in Dion obliges him to calumniate e chastity of Lucretia. He has a whole story arranged to rn the tables against her, poor thing, and to excuse Tarquin. s for the Fabricii and the Scipios, of course he thinks now that

there never were such men, any more than there were Amadis
and Agramans. It is no wonder, then, that fable comes o
poorly from the hands of such wiseacres. So we hear of t
dolphin that was in love with a fiddler's boy of Thebes, and wh
carried him across the sea on her back a-fishing while he sun
the siege of Troy to the tune of Green-sleeves or Pop goes t
Weasel. So also our Fulbanks say to Mammon,

> "——————— The nine Muses,
> I have read, madam, in a learned author,
> Were but a knot of travelling tawny gipsies,
> That lived by country canting, and old songs,
> And picking worms out of fools' fingers, which
> Was palmistry, forsooth! and for Apollo,
> Whom they call'd father, a poor silly piper,
> That kept a thatch'd house upon some fine hill
> Not far from Helicon, or old Bridewell,
> Where he sold switches, till his hut was burn'd,
> And he, for loss of this poor tenement,
> Ran mad, from whence came all the mighty stir
> Of that which we now call poetic fury."

But all this was outdone by some of the ancients themselve
for in a tragedy of Euripides, for instance, there is a brave n
who accuses Hercules of being a coward, "that is to say," ad
Balzac, "amongst men there was a man who was of a differe
opinion from the human race, and who gave the lie to all t
world. The 'pro' and 'contra' came into the world," he c
cludes, "with 'mine' and 'thine;' and reason is not older th
anti-reason. Sound opinions have never had peace. Mali
and ignorance have been always in arms against them; and
the present day how many sects and heresies, the results of
much pure criticism, as its adepts call it, make war upon po
truth!"

These men of great critical pretensions, in fact, are not r
strained by respect for times or characters, though both shou
be taken into account always even in their line of busines
They ridicule the Crusades, call them fevers of the age a
vulgar epidemics. "To be sure," adds Balzac, "one of the
in the same breath, assured me that there never had been su

a man as Alexander, and that his history was a romance as fabulous and improbable as that of Amadis." He gives another example, speaking as follows:—"As there is nothing so pure that detraction cannot dirty it, some have said that Charles V. repented having taken up his rest at St. Just, and for proof they give out this fable. They say that he had 500 écus in a purse of black velvet, which he would never let out of his grasp, even when he went to bed at night. They assure us that he used to kiss, caress, idolize this purse. So, after despising the riches of two worlds, the pearls and diamonds of so many crowns that he had worn, he has become a miser for the sake of 500 écus. A natural subject of the king of Spain assured me that this was true; but I only laughed at him as an apocryphal historian*."

But here our men of exact views and learning are getting on the ground of something that looks like crime, on which we professed our intention not to follow them. To be sure they invite us to do so provokingly enough, "Ah, now you are about to exercise high criticism!"

> "Scintillant oculi; dicisque facisque, quod ipse
> Non sani esse hominis, non sanus juret Orestes†."

Now we are about to be confronted with the man of letters and of erudition, the man of genius and of capacity, the man consummate in all the sciences, natural, moral, theological, and political, the illustrious critic "per omnes modos et casus." Well, what is the result? Something like this, perhaps. In order to be rendered more mentally serene, we shall be told that during "the unchristian ages," which lasted till the sixteenth century, "the Cross was a myth, the Cross was the fetish of an idolatrous Christianity." And this delectable subject for meditation will be offered as part of the "amenities of literature;" and, in order to settle matters finally, we shall be referred to "the very curious chapter on the Fetish Worship in that very original and learned work, The Doctor, v. 133." There is no use in arguing either with such a doctor; for, as an old poet says, "he would then only shake his bottle head, and out of his corky brain squeeze out a pitiful learned face, and be silent."

* Balzac. † Pers. iii.

I am aware that we may meet others who are more discreet, ar armed with sharper weapons of erudition; but, with regard them, it may be enough to say here, that if there must be suc people as Bayle, though Gibson even says of that chief, "upo the whole I believe that he had more of a certain multifariou reading than real erudition*;" at least, as M. de Sacy quiet adds, "there needs be very few of them;" and for many re sons, which it was not his business to specify, not one of them as we shall now proceed to show, is eligible for admission amon the votaries of serene hours.

The sort of places that we steer for or walk to are not exactl like the "terrestrial paradise of Cirey," formed and inhabited i the philosophers, of which Madame du Chatelet said, "in trut it is very hard to have to pass one's life in battles in the bosom of retreat and happiness;" nor have they in the least the atmo sphere of universities with their entre-mangeries professorale as the same Bayle says elsewhere. We want, consequently, i order to escape from such amenities, minds of rather a differen turn. For our expeditions, as we have long ago suggested, w stand in need of persons who, without any parade of fine qualities possess a fund of good-nature, and that loving and charitable disposition and propriety of feeling which no other acquire ments will tempt them to violate or neglect. We require per sons who "as Christians lined with nobleness," to use the ex pression of a French writer, know that cleverness is not wort goodness, that genius is below charity, and that human weak ness should be treated with a certain indulgence; we even wan men who, however skilful as proficients in questions of taste can wink where they ought not to be too sharp-sighted, and know instinctively where they ought to show consideration compassion, and sympathy, rather than critical discernment however by the mere love of exactness called for; we want person, for instance, like that Romanus to whom Pliny writes for, after telling him about the numberless inscriptions by dif ferent persons on the walls round the fountain at the source o the Clitumnus, he adds, "There are many of these you wil greatly admire, as there are some that will make you laugh

* Miscel. iv. 325.

but I must correct myself when I say so: you are too humane, I know, to laugh upon such an occasion." Now, your critic of the bad school, who, instead of tenderness where it is a question of wounding humanity, has at that moment, as at all other times and every where, a mind to show he can be merciless, caustic, and satirical, let the interest compromised or endangered be what it may, belongs to a different family of minds from that of this Romanus, and it is one with which we wish to contract no alliance or acquaintanceship whatever. Nay, let them go, a pack of quiet ones! "Let no one," says Richard of St. Victor, who seems to have known them pretty well, "transcribe these passages unless such as can be edified by them. For you know how prone are some to wrest simple sayings, intent only on things which can generate questions of words, of which there is no end, and but little fruit*." Nor does it by any means follow that in consequence of rejecting such a spirit, and declining the advances of all who are animated by it, we purchase our serenity at the expense of truth, and subject ourselves to deception, and to a charge of wishing to remain in ignorance. On the contrary, as an old writer says, "the good-natured man is endowed with a certain discerning faculty which the envious are deprived of. Shallow wits and superficial critics are blind to excellences; they see nothing but faults and blemishes; show them a poem, it is poor stuff,—a picture, it is daubing,—a building, it is irregular; a lad or lass that can dispense sunshine by their conversation or their looks, they are vulgar. They remind one of the devil in Milton, who, though made an angel of light, could see nothing to please him even in Paradise, and hated our first parents though in their state of innocence." But still, I must again and again ask, even were it otherwise, what could we make of such special pleaders? I would respectfully inquire, as a great author asks, "if you have never met any very knowing and enlightened gentleman whose acquaintance is by no means desirable? If not, you are monstrous lucky." Things may not be precisely quite what they ought to be; but look you, people of our sort know that after all they themselves are men; and accordingly, as Jules Janin says, "in

* De Gradibus Charitatis.

good faith, every thing pleases them, every thing serves them. They hate neither the noise of the boys in the fields, nor the shopping of the young party in the street,—neither the humour of the cabbee on his box, nor the chaffing of the boatmen on the shore,—neither the sight of linen drying on the hedge, nor the sound of the thrashing in the barn; they do not hate either the old clipped yews of the French garden, the shrubs cut into Apollos or Dianas, the huntress or the fountain with its jet d'eau trying at intervals to reach to the height of the marble Faun with the head broken off. They never care for inconveniences, or things out of character with place; and they find it much easier to reconcile all things, literary, artistic, social and philosophic, than they could have expected. As far as literature is concerned, they prefer the mind which can find beauty to that which detects its opposite." Of course, in the way of books, silly things ought not to last, or find favour; and so perhaps, our poor pages should be consigned to the stores for waste paper, as was recommended by a high authority; but still, is that a reason, they feel inclined to ask sometimes, why there should be created and perpetuated a literature of vulgarity, bitterness, and scorn, sparing nothing human or sacred in its sweep? pursuing its executions, as a French writer says, "under an apparent impartiality, and depending for its success perhaps on the scornful haughtiness of its tone, and the rudeness of its form. If criticism is to be instructive," she continues, "it must be gentle and generous in order to be persuasive. It must not esteem itself free because it seeks to be emancipated from the common obligations of charity which rest on all the world. Its melancholy humour; its theories of universal disgust; its aversion for what is simple, off-hand, and agreeable in art and society, with its constant reasoning and analysis, and straining after what no one cares a snap for, would give us all the spleen. I remember," she adds, "being asked by one of these gentlemen if I was acquainted with the Théodicée of Leibnitz, which book is my sheet-anchor, and that, Heaven forgive me! I said no, hastily, lest I should hear him begin to demolish it." How could we be serene while such workmen were labouring around us? How, at all events, should we, gone out for the day in summer time, ever be able to get on with persons such as Balzac

describes, who "want to bring back that condemned sect, that calumnious philosophy, that public profession of barkers, biters, devourers,—that metamorphosis of men into curs,—the order of Cynical Fathers? I knew," he says, "a little wretch of this kind who fastened on every thing written, and found nothing in any book endurable. He never cited but to blame; he detracted instead of teaching; all his life he was the sworn opponent of every one who wrote or spoke. They used to call him the tyrant of Mount Geneviève, but wrongly in my opinion, for his tyranny was bounded neither by mountains nor seas; it extended from one end of the earth to the other, and from the beginning of the world to the present hour. He was the universal persecutor of ancient and modern virtue, of all the living and all the dead, so far as to resuscitate the quarrel picked against Virgil for his 'cujum pecus,'—so far as to pursue the rights of Palæmon and Orbilius, and to recommence the actions brought 1600 years ago against the orators and poets, against Latins and Greeks."

In reference to this encouragement of suspicions and accusations as a general turn of mind, some one says, "that even the newspapers of this island, which seem so prone to yield it, are as pernicious to weak heads in England as ever books of chivalry were to Don Quixote and his countrymen." Cicero seems to prescribe the contrary rules of what may be called the natural criticism, and the consequences that suit our purpose when we seek serenity. "For neither," he says, "is he who can do best by any means to be left out of our common exhortation, nor is he who can only do something to be deterred by it; for the former seems to me to be a kind of divine gift, the latter the part of humanity *."

Then again, is it not obvious that, if we have any wish to escape from a great danger, to which both the intelligence and the heart are liable, we are driven in self-defence to object to men whose bent of mind reduces them to the necessity of always trying to turn into ridicule the acts, and persons, and writings that, however imperfect, as all that is human must be, ought to be felt as so many sources of moral vitality, eliciting, whenever and wherever we think of them, and for all their faults, not to

* De Oratore, xx.

say because of them, unbounded admiration and generous resolves? "A mon gré le Virgile est joli quelquefois." Such condescension, whether towards persons or books, is not of the right stamp. Each of these good judges resembles that artisan so famous in the history of Alexander, who thought the Colossals little, and the Pyramids low. In regard to some person or thing, we ought all to be lovers of one sort or other, and I should like to see how a common lover would treat their insinuations. As Speed says to Valentine, "If you love, so far from being a critic you cannot even see." Yet who would prefer having Speed's eyes? There are times when the said Valentine would curry no favour from us for having in his own eyes the lights they were wont to have when he chid at Sir Proteus for going ungartered. Do lovers imagine that there was no reason from the earliest times for always representing Love with a bandage over his eyes? Do critics suppose that we gain much by always looking through microscopes at every object? The truth is, that this odious habit of theirs, this habit of snubbing people right and left after they have made their observations with such an abominable university air, would soon tell upon our best and highest, as well as on our serenest feelings, and then ultimately on our spirits, however at first cheerful. It is of this very disposition that Pope, in the conclusion of the Dunciad, says,

> "Before her Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
> And all its varying rainbows die away."

The process, so easily learned, of reducing every thing to what is thought, and often very falsely, to be matter of fact, and of requiring a strictly literal interpretation of things belonging to a different domain from that of the positive, soon effects this object, and casts a cold gloom around and over us. But

> "Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best
> Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest?"

An old writer meets them in an amusing way, and says, "As for our tramontane lovers, when they begin their midnight complaint with

> 'My lodging is on the cold ground,'

we are not of course to understand them in the rigour of the letter, since it would be impossible for a British swain to condole himself long in that situation without dying for his beloved." Still, it would be worse than silly to pick a literary quarrel with him for the words of his song. But we need not dwell on such things, for, as Cicero would say, "perspicua sunt hæc quidem et in vulgari prudentia sita." But there are not wanting other reasons why such a disposition should be considered incompatible with the object that we have in view.

We have to be on our guard against tendencies when there would be neither time nor opportunity for the full development of an antagonism formally pronounced. "There are people, then," says Balzac, "who push reasoning to excess. Such are those speculative men who aim beyond their object, leaving roads for by-ways, and who lose themselves in order to reach the place they are going to sooner. We may call them distillers of essences; they put every thing into the alembic, reducing it to nothing by dint of subtlety. They embrace probability because they have painted and embellished it to their taste, and reject truth because it is not their invention. These gentlemen fancy that there is design and finesse every where, and that all the actions of men are the fruit of meditation. Nothing passes before their eyes of which they do not seek the mystic and allegoric sense. They never stop at the letter—these subtle interpreters of other people's thoughts. If two princes attack each other with all their force, they believe that they have come to a mutual understanding, and that it is all to deceive other princes. They are like those who are said not to trust to the death of King Philip, as he had let himself be killed to catch the Athenians. There have been always such alchemists and blowers distilling human things, giving more liberty than they ought to their conjectures and suspicions. Because Junius Brutus pretended to be mad they suspect all silly people, and think that their simplicity is only a concealed artifice. They think the silence of those who say nothing covers dangerous thoughts. These subtle doctors think that Hannibal did not wish to take Rome, in order to perpetuate the war; that Augustus chose Tiberius for successor that he might himself be the more regretted; that he made love only to discover secrets; that his mind never acted but by rule and

compass; that all his actions were weighed, and all his vices studied. In my judgment all this is to make the world more artful than it is; it is to interpret men," he adds, with an excusable haste not having read Gladstone, "as grammarians explain Homer; they find what is not in him, and make him out to be a philosopher and a physician, when he is only a tale-teller and a ballad-singer. Let us content ourselves sometimes with the literal sense, and not seek a sacrament in every syllable. There is no need of flying so far for truth, or of going so high for things." In fine, by reason of over-subtlety and of affecting depth every where, the opinions adopted by such persons seem not alone ridiculous, but often wantonly subversive of mental tranquillity, without a shadow of compensation.

Not to remark that there are many Phormios among them, who talk about things on which they have had no personal experience, the whole direction that they give their thoughts is calculated to promote needless unpleasant dissent, rather than comfortable and rational agreement, more uneasiness than serenity. Indeed there are instances of their acknowledging it themselves. "Becoming a man of letters and a journalist," says a French writer, "I had to keep moving; the mania for judging others, the passion for writing, criticism as a trade, the longing for personal importance, by degrees invaded all my pleasures, mixed with all my sensations, and changed into gall my natural good will for others. The capacity for admiration I gave up, as if it were a needless load for a long journey. Was not that a great misfortune to lose in a day that universal benevolence for others, that enthusiasm ever ready, that virtuous passion of all hours, that childlike simplicity, that ignorance of so much? Yesterday to have been such a good-natured fellow, so loving and beloved; to-day to be such a disagreeable individual, always looking out for hatreds, irritating others, and attacking people's reputations as if they were all so much shining but fragile glass*?" "I cannot avoid feeling profoundly sad," says another of the profession. "Of what use all these millions of words with which I try to express my fugitive thoughts, so full of conviction for myself at the time of conceiving them, and

* J. Janin, Contes nouveaux, Préface.

often so false, so exaggerated, when they are fixed on the paper!" Then, continuing to criticize his own criticism, he adds, "It is an abyss, this art! At times you grow giddy. From question to question, you arrive at a last and insolvable question, universal doubt,—the most painful of all thoughts,—the most discouraging,—the next to despair. It is a poor work,—this kind of severity, which does not even merit the name of work. It is an official idleness, a perpetual and voluntary laziness, the dolorous raillery of impotence, the death-rattle of sterility,—it is a cry of hell and of agony. Woe and shame on me if I can never accept or achieve a better task*!" Such are at times the confessions of those who would now assail us with critical objections to every thing we love. The poet Bryant, similarly involved, turns from such engagements to his green river, and says in lines that many might use in reference to our Thames:

"Though forced to drudge for the dregs of men,
And scrawl strange words with the barbarous pen,
And mingle among the jostling crowd,
Where the sons of strife are subtle and loud,
I often come to this quiet place,
To breathe the airs that ruffle thy face,
And gaze upon thee in silent dream;
For in thy lonely and lovely stream
An image of that calm life appears
That won my heart in my greener years."

"I hear," says Nicholas of Clairvaux, writing to a man of the critical turn, though placed in different circumstances from these last, "that you pass the whole day reading the philosophers, et cetera. Do you think that you even perfectly understand all that you read? Trust me, you would find more with us in a hatchet and a saw, than with yourself and all your books; for to us the mountains distil sweetness, the hills flow with milk, honey issues from the hardest rock, and all the trees of the wood clap their hands†." Though your chemist may assure us that it is still nothing but Thames water on which we float, and though it is clear we shall get no milk near London

* Gustave Planche. † Nic. Clareval. Epist. 38.

unless we pay for it, something like this is what our poor oarsmen and pedestrians might say to all proficients of the kind. Do you wish, they will ask, to enjoy a serene hour? Lay aside those airs; keep that huge mass of paper in your pocket; leave your criticism, with all its envy, and spite, and cleverness, and come, handle a scull, if you know how to do it, or take to walking through the fields and groves, and be like the rest of us. As a fine writer would express it, "The realism of our preoccupations would cause you to descend from your clouds, and to feel a very pure and beneficent charm." But we have only common minds, "and your intolerant men of wisdom," as Hazlitt says, "cannot get on with fellows of that description, so little cogitabund; they would turn round at our first simple remark, measure us from head to foot with a kind of wondering indifference, and then cast a half-inquiring glance at each other, just as much as to say, 'Fellows not overburthened, eh?'" Well, people need not feel abashed for all that; since, even for those fit to cope with them, there are occasions, as the same author adds, "when it is refreshing to escape from the turmoil and final nothingness of the understanding, and repose upon that contentedness of mediocrity which seems to have attained its end without the trouble of wisdom. The commonest minds do not vegetate for nothing, any more than the grass in a green lawn. We do not require the trees to talk and say smart things to us, or get impatient at the monotonous quiet of the fields and hedges. We love them for their contrast to noise and bustle; for their presenting to us something native and elementary; for the peaceful thoughts they suggest to us, and the part they bear in the various beauty of creation*." If all this cannot be felt, at least, in order that things may be put in a proper train for the accomplishment of our object, it will be necessary to guard against contracting the least of the airs of your over-wise and precise people, who are so apt to quarrel with a straw, and make all things uncomfortable. Supposing, therefore, even that you do hear some one talk like Celia in As You Like It, and say, "I cannot go no further," one would like to find good sense, and still more good nature, prevailing over precision, and both of

* Hazlitt, Round Table.

them making a sweet secret act of indulgence, after the manner of Balzac defending Montaigne, and saying, "How could a man have spoken pure French in Quercy and Perigord? A man who is besieged by bad examples, far from the succour of the good, could he all alone be able to defend himself against a whole people, against his wife, against his relations, against his friends, who are all so many enemies of good French? What a difficulty! to guard, amidst so many plots and so many thieves, the sound opinions which he might have brought from the court! Montaigne might be excused, then, if he did not always write as our delicate people would wish him to have done. In his time these faults were not forbidden; and faults are innocent which are more ancient than laws." Of course, it won't do now in these days of the schoolmaster going forth, when we all have to look a little blank, when no one is fit for any thing before he comes out of an examination with flying colours, no one up to the standard until he can distinguish between the terms "form" and "figure," as applied to a hat, until he knows whether "substance" and "accident" are synonymous words, whether logic is an art or a science, whether it has for object the three operations of mind or the third only, whether there are six categories or only one, and whether the conclusion belongs to the essence of the syllogism—I say it would never do at a period of such advanced knowledge to have any of us so backward as the man known to Balzac, who would search all day in a map to find "democracy" and "aristocracy," thinking to put his finger on them there as he would on Dalmatia and Croatia. But neither do we desire to have for companions a set of fellows all metamorphosed into so many walking or pulling glossaries of hard words. We should, I think, on the whole, rather prefer some one who could say, like Bembo,—

> "I have a natural wit,
> A wholesome wit out of court,
> For I kept company with those that read,
> And learn'd wit by the ear, when any would slip from them;
> For where there is plenty some will out."

I know some one who remembers feeling rather pleased, as if he had received a compliment, when one day a certain boy

whom he fell in with said to him, alluding to something that the papers were full of, "Have you heard tell of it?" It was supposing him left like himself to that sweet, natural way of acquiring knowledge which consists in social intercourse.

"Quod satis est sapio mihi ——,"

said the old poet. I care not to be like a demonstrative man of information. You want to know all about this and that.

> "Hoc est, quod palles? Cur quis non prandeat, hoc est?
> His populus ridet: multumque torosa juventus
> Ingeminat tremulos naso crispante cachinnos *."

If a man of great critical genius should by chance find or force his way into our party, we only hope it may be one like Balzac, "un académicien malgré lui;" for then we may be sure of having nothing to complain of on the score of pedantry, whatever may be the number of his quotations which might be adduced in support of the charge.

Upon the whole, it seems but natural that we should feel inclined to select our society for such occasions pretty much in the same way as C. Lucilius used to say he wished to compose his audience; for he objected to having either the most ignorant, who are, after all, stupid, or the most learned, who make themselves often troublesome; by neither of which classes did he wish even his books to be read, saying that the one as infants, empty of all thought, were illiterate loiterers, and would understand nothing, whereas the other would perhaps understand more than himself, and more than he intended to express. He wanted not a Persius, the most learned; he wanted a Lælius Decumus, whom he knew to be a good fellow, and not illiterate. So also our sort of people, if it be occasion in summer time of seeking a few serene hours in the open air, will be generally found to desire what may be equally remote from the inkhorn and the plough. They are unwilling to have with them your mere rustic simpleton, but still more those worshippers of the genius of criticism, more learned than wise, or indeed any other alumni of the sombre college, which we should all have been only too

* Persius, iii.

appy to let alone, if there were any chance that its graduates would have let us alone, and permitted us to enjoy serenity, even when knocking up this book, designed to represent it. The truth is, that with such dispositions, or such companions, it is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve the object proposed on any of our excursions.

They who are too empty in regard to thoughts, and they who are too thoughtful or too dull to like any thing but the greatest possible stimulus of reflection and pure reason, are equally wanting in complexional fitness for a thorough enjoyment of this sort of thing on which for the hour we have set our hearts. You are not one of us, we should say to them from the first moment, as the herb-seller in the flower market replied to Theophrastes. With regard to the latter class, it is not we of the river or the groves alone that say it. It is no less grave a personage than Richard of St. Victor, who gives all the world this caveat, saying, "Literati, et inflati, sed nunquid beati? imo beatus vir cujus est nomen Domini spes ejus, et non respexit in vanitates et insanias falsas*." These Barbons who employ a great apparatus of learning to examine whether Achilles was fed with marrow only, whether it was the marrow of lions and stags, or that of lions only; who can tell you what the Countess Matilda ought to have done with her landed property, who know the colour of Juno's gown on her wedding-day, who can tell you the hue of the beard of Ajax, and what sort of cap Ulysses wore, for they prove that he did not wear a hat, and cite in evidence the Etymologicum Magnum, and a legion of scholiasts, of whom the best known is Tzetzes—what else can you say of them, after looking at their faces, but repeat Richard's words, "inflati, sed nunquid beati?" "Our incomparable Saumaise," as Balzac calls him, who plays with gryphons and enigmas, who finds no place in the whole republic of letters difficult, and who has made his way through precipices, who is stopped nowhere in such attenuated regions, may not, perhaps, owing to some singular privilege, be inflated; but who on earth, and still less who in heaven, will predicate that by reason of his discoveries he is happy? "Nunquid beatus?" Nay, take

* In Ps. cxviii.

the case even of one of those estimable men, who, through enthusiastic attachment to certain epochs, make themselves, M. de Sacy says, chroniclers of the eleventh century, with formal design to out-believe the credulity of that age (assumir the truth of all charges against it on that score), for fear appearing to belong to their own times,—supposing them n over-credulous, insane deputies, as it were, from the past, actin also, a kind of comedy which one might have thought impossil for a serious mind, and betraying, as he suggests, by that ve exaggeration of faith in such a case, scepticism,—inflated wit sort of literary confidence in a weak cause,—can they be, eith with themselves or with others, serene—without a shadow misgiving, or of remorse, or of opposition, either from others in their own minds, to trouble them? "Inflati, sed nunqu beati?" And to cite an instance that will more especially co home to the heart of such persons as constitute parties like ou on the river, without at once blaring out the name of the in vidual involved in it through veneration for his profound, rea serviceable knowledge and truly estimable character in oth respects, that great scholar of the mediæval learning, of who every one has at least heard the name, who on the day of h marriage found means to reserve for himself seven hours study, can we say that his example in that point is calculate to reverse all the reasons hitherto alleged in proof of the u suitableness of such exclusive habits, and of this turn of mi for the object with which we are concerned? The memory Ducange is sacred, but the unhappy Budæus too, whom, as f as I know, no one particularly wants to screen, must needs sa we are told, that the only lost day in his life was that on whi he was married, for on that day he had only six hours for rea ing! What a feller it is! One wonders why he leaves h books at all. Why does he not act like Morose on a simil occasion, who got on his whole nest of night-caps, and lock himself up in the top of the house as high as ever he cou climb to escape from the noise, and to sleep there comfortabl by himself? Certainly, whether married or single, one ca hardly fancy him fit to be invited on the river, or to any of ou suburban heaths or gardens; for, in brief, there is a way talking learnedly, and critically, and cleverly, that ordina

people are as little qualified to enjoy as would be an unscientific ear to listen to a band of violinists executing some long piece in E flat or A major. Amidst an admiring audience of connoisseurs, the uninitiated victim who has to sit it out feels ill at ease. To him, isolated, the entrance even of a policeman is agreeable and comfortable, as presenting a countenance of sympathy by a negative, and yielding in consequence a relief which was before wanting. The truth is, without reference to the former example, there is in such cases at the bottom incompatibility of feelings, and tastes, and tempers, so incurable, let what words will come to the surface, that a union, to the comfort of all parties, when it is a question of going out for the day, would be unnatural; and what is more, the very object kept in view by others, as we suggested in the beginning, would be rejected with scorn by such proficients.

> "For some have their opinions so diseased,
> They come not with a purpose to be pleased;"

and, as for others, they follow a form of life which is self-destructive in more respects than one. Montaigne says, that the excessive love of reading with which persons can grow silly, yields an unhealthy pleasure, and a sombre pleasure which afflicts the body. And some of the ancients went further still, and wrote as if they sought to please any class but the learned; for, said they, "honesty forbids us to be proud with companions, it forbids us to love money. It requires us to be agreeable and friendly in words, and feelings, and actions. Do scholastic studies, then," they ask, "always produce such manners? Do they inspire simplicity, modesty, moderation, frugality, clemency? Oh, the learned man! is what many desire to hear, but we are content with a more rustic title, Oh, the good fellow! and, besides, I can hardly say," they add, "whether I am more angry with those who wish us to know nothing, or with those who will not even leave us thus much—to know nothing*." Upon the whole, I think that people are clearly justified in objecting to have companions of this sort with their bundles of examination papers, or to subject their own minds to the influence of such

* Seneca, Epist. 89.

thoughts and examples, since what we want is that kind o conversation which Solomon speaketh of as being composed o words like honeycombs, which "give sweetness to the soul an wholesomeness to the body," which is not exactly the resul that we have been contemplating.

But, come on, we have been out of the sun a great while If you mean to see the dances and hear the sweet songs, yo must make haste. Well, in spite of the subject and the pros treatment of it, we can suppose minds to have been exhilarate by the music and some talk of a different kind at interval while bodies after some fatigue were being refreshed, and there was no one, as Homer says, who wanted an equal portion of th feast; for it would not do on occasions of this kind to swallo nothing but words, as Athenæus says. So when they ha enough of food and drink, and of harmony and all things, the resumed their oars, dashed like an arrow down the stream, re gained their respective houses, and partook of the gift of slee perfectly indifferent to my critical gentleman, who, in order t have the last word, will perhaps declare emphatically that the whole conversation has had no other result than that of con ferring it on himself.

CHAPTER XV.

IT is not every day that one can arrange lon expeditions, especially when complicated b the desire to "wait for the waggon," and t make four or five miles by land before reach ing the place of embarkation, to spend o "the wide back" of the Thames, as Home would say, a few pleasant hours. There i always, however, the resource of Chelsea, boasting of such noble fleet of swift vessels for those who like river play. S now, as is said in the old song,

"To Pimlicoe we'll go,
Where merry we shall be."

It will do well for a suburb humour, as Ben Jonson calls it. About high water, if the moon is favourable, and the wind blows from the east, it is a majestic flood which wafts you up to Putney. The villas on the Fulham side have their weeping willows hanging over it, which yield on a hot day, at intervals, when, with some friend or other, you want to be on the quiet, no ineffectual shelter. If you land near them, like Pope,

"One day in Chelsea meadows walking,
Of poetry and such things talking,"

there are those fair suburban lanes that still proffer to the denizens of London glimpses of rural fields and shadows from quiet hedgerows; but if you make for the Star and Garter, on the other shore, just above the crazy old bridge, there may be had a room looking on the river which can really serve with other things to entrance you, while, with elbows on the table, gazing at the prospect, you can chat with your companion and pass an hour that will never be forgotten. On the way, we must allow that it is not the same thing as the Thames at Kew or Richmond. There are sinister figures from below the Pool, ὑπέρβιον ὄβριν ἔχοντες, to be met with from time to time; there are dead fish floating up with the tide, and we had better not ask the cause of such a phenomenon. There is some officious person talking learnedly about Lollards' towers at Lambeth; there are still more gloomy towers nearly opposite, which one can hardly pass without a sigh, as they raise up modern images of that penance which London society requires at present in order to take tea in the suburbs without marching thither in large battalions, armed with revolvers and life-preservers. But under the circumstances of a limited ardour for "disport aquatic," and the wish of some companion perhaps to be back early for some notable project or another, such as to buy

"Any silk, any thread,
Any toys for the head,
Of the new'st, and fin'st, fin'st wear-a!"

or, if not for shopping,—and you know, any thing for a quie life,—for some such finale as the poet Green proposes, saying,

> "If spleen fogs rise at close of day,
> I clear my evening with a play,
> Or to some concert take my way.
> The company, the shine of lights,
> The scenes of humour, music's flights,
> Adjust, and set the soul to rights;"

if, I say, such should be the final arrangement that any one has made, this short trip offers you some advantages which you will do well to avail yourself of, in realizing, even under difficulties, a serene hour.

When the old gipsy woman, whom Cervantes describes in his Bohemian of Madrid, expressed admiration and amaze at what Preciosa had been saying to the company:—"Hold your tongue grandmother," replied the girl; "all the things you have heard me utter are but rattles and child's play compared with the serious matters which remain in my breast." Our preceding discussions may not have found very admiring listeners: there was nothing in them to amaze any one, I admit; but there is something coming that will at least prove more grave and important; and there are even midsummer holidays, when pleasure can be enhanced by thinking for a few moments on what is grave and important. Has not the honest fisherman, author of the Complete Angler, in which he quotes St. Augustine and St. Ambrose, and a host of other grave Fathers, left us an example in that respect? Does not a great modern novelist say on one occasion, "The conversation became gradually grave, as it usually does with two companions in youth, while they fall into confiding talk on what they think and wish*?" Does not a poet, a humourist, and an accomplished companion, say on a certain occasion, "He is one who can sympathize both with gravity and with gaiety, and this is a godsend to a mixed nature like mine." And pray who has not such a nature? With that old grey tower in front of us on the opposite shore, there will, at all events, be something to keep us in countenance, though now,

* What will he do with it?

as the musicians say, "Faith, we may put up our pipes and let those who are for singing begone. The matter to come in their absence, if it be not too grave for some that know little but bowling, will please plentifully."

We may seem hitherto, in the estimation of some of your reading men, men who think always to settle matters with others in an off-hand way without much expenditure of thought on their part, to have been only stringing together, without any unity of purpose, a number of unconnected remarks or essays on subjects trivial enough, which might just as well have been left separate, as presented in combination under a common title; but, with their sweet leave, it was not so. While afloat we were angling all the while, though you perceived not how we gave the line; and if in the garden, we can say these were all arrows shot off at a mark. They in their wisdom may have thought them at the time lost; but we are going now to pick them up, and we shall find that every one of them fell near it and was well aimed. The fact is, that as a ball set a-rolling, or a boat impelled by the stream, will both have to be governed by laws of mathematical precision, so there was a tendency not expressed or hinted at, or even always suspected by ourselves perhaps in all that has been passed hitherto, from the very first excursion in which we felt the necessity for having a sense of beauty and a youthful mind, down to that which occupied us on our last ramble, which has for its object the formation and moulding gradually of a higher character than any thing as yet, in a direct way, proposed for imitation; and of that character to the formation of which those qualifications already insisted on have contributed in this way of tendency and impulse, by the force of a stream, as it were, it now remains for us in the sequel to speak a little; which talk will reveal the importance and fitness, again, of other things to minister to a pure enjoyment of serene hours —character and aptitude still arising as much from the absence of certain dispositions which are not implied in them as from the presence of some positive qualifications which they involve and require. Comrades and scholars, you'll hear this, and, as Compass says, "look for as much true secular wit and deep lay sense as can be shown on such a commonplace."

No one, of course, ought to be so extravagant as to deny, that

circumstanced as the world is in our times, there can be serenit
where the whole ideal, respecting what constitutes it, is not a
once realized externally and in all respects; for much must th
left referred to the sweet, and silent, and undiscoverable work
ing of a Providence that overrules all things with goodnes
We have ourselves produced on a former occasion an example t
prove that we are not so unreasonable or immoderate, or eve
so irreligious as to be guided in our choice of companions b
maxims of a contrary import. But it may very reasonably b
maintained, that this object of gaining happy hours, if consis
tently kept in view, and logically provided for, would in a simpl
natural way, as well as in accordance with the deductions o
philosophy, tend to secure, one by one, all the qualities needf
for that purpose, the means proving infinitely more importan
than the end; so that their attainment, even if the latter shoul
not be realized in this life, would give a value to such excursion
as contribute to it capable of atoning, perhaps, for many faul
in those who reported them, of consoling them later in th
bitterest hour, and even of bespeaking some pity, if not indu
gence, for their memory.

Looking for our arrows, then, we enter here upon a somewha
different order of observations from any that have been directl
made hitherto, and must consider certain things relative to wha
is allowed to be the gravest and most important of all humai
concerns, namely, the views and discipline which, thoug
adopted with an immediate view to the interests of another life
have, as all experience proves, a very direct influence upon ou
serenity in the present world, of some of which views and dis
positions the absence is requisite, in order to qualify men for
attaining the object proposed throughout these rambles; while
of others the presence is no less necessary, so far at least as the
logic of the thing is concerned, though we are free to admit
that Providence may in some exceptional cases dispense with
that necessity. I do not know whether we shall curry much
favour by this whole day's discussion; for, as Agatho says,

> "If we do tell the truth, we shall not please some;
> And if we please them, we shall speak no truth."

"Truth," says an old dramatist, "is never without a scratch'd

face." For my part, I know nothing more than that we are likely, as Macilente says, to have an exceeding melancholy time of it. It won't exactly at the moment add to our serenity if we let ourselves think much about this dilemma. For at least eleven hours out of the twelve, it is intensely disagreeable on the contrary to reflect that, for expressing a conviction on such matters, some of the most amiable and accomplished people imaginable, considering their sad necessities, or what they think such, may be led to think very ill of us, or, at least, to keep aloof from us, as if we had in our boat or in our pocket something as bad as the plague of Athens. The thought of such a consequence is enough to make us say like the fool to Lear, "Prithee, cockswain, keep a schoolmaster on board that can teach us to lie; I would fain learn to lie, since all this is to come of our speaking true on shore." Nevertheless, on occasions of this kind, since we suppose that the youthful spirit is always on board with us, I do not see why we should not follow the example of a certain lad that I have known, who in cases of mental distress, arising from this very cause, after giving to his thought the best utterance that he can, will always end by taking up his poor fiddle, to console himself in a corner by grating the strings into something like a tune to please his own ear, if it did not give much satisfaction to any one else. It is true, as I have been assured, that in one instance he had no real reason for his trouble, since it was caused merely by the arch trick of a merry sister, who, in order to draw him out a little, called him an infidel for putting in a word against those who think ill of the old religion of Christendom, when he shut himself up in his room to shed a flood of tears, after protesting to her that he was no infidel. She soon undeceived him, kissing him on both cheeks, and telling him that it was only a bit of her fun, and that she was even of the same opinion as himself on those very matters; but his final resource, as I have been assured, in all such sorrow, was his musical instrument; and who is there that has not something, if not a violin, at least a cornet, or flute, or pencil, or pen, to serve him for the same purpose? But even were it otherwise with us, and let what may happen, there are occasions, and the present is one of them, when people can't be commonly honest without showing extra-

ordinary magnanimity; therefore, come what will, let truth, as the old saying is, be one's friend. What such people as ourselves, on the river or in the garden, think, or what they ought to think if they have any mother wit, we shall not hesitate to say frankly and without reserve.

> "So we'll speak plain, and in a nation free,
> Assume an honest layman's liberty."

Few here will be of a contrary opinion from us to-day, I hope; to-morrow, when we get back, I am sure there will be none, when they have ruminated what will now be laid before them. Having suggested what is to be avoided and eliminated, we shall then proceed to notice certain other qualities in relation to the same transcendent sphere, of which the presence, for the same purpose, is to be required. But the former will yield sufficient matter for our thoughts during the present expedition. But one opponent at a time; we'll fight their legions o'er. So let us pull to land, and repose ourselves on that bank near the willows; and as there seems to be no wish to proceed much farther to-day, let us resign ourselves to chattering for the rest of it.

I shall begin by suggesting, then, that the dismal gloomy spirit associated sometimes with religious views ought in the first place to be dispelled and got rid of. This, indeed, looks like speaking with a view to our own interest; since, if we do not suppress such a spirit within and around us, it is pretty clear that it will suppress us and our excursions in search of a serene hour,—a thing, by the way, of which it has no hesitation in letting us understand that it loathes the name and the very idea. So Sir Solitary Plot says to Lady Peregrine,

> "——— Dear niece,
> Before I go to sleep, I must commend
> Advices to thee; 'tis part of my devotion;
> In brief, because the day is fair and bright,
> Have a great care you be not seen too public;
> Your chamber's spacious enough to walk in.
> There's danger in society, and the world
> Is full of plots."
>
> "What plots?"

"I know not; but
Be solitary as I am, and be safe;
Trust not the air abroad by my example.
Take heed of plots."

Thus will speak some that every body has known elsewhere, perhaps, while aping, too, possibly, in their humorous severity, or in a feigned gravity, even "that dull dress whose sight doth pale and freeze the blood," to entreat whom, or assay them to any pastime, would present our poor inoffensive excursionists in a position something like that of the suitors embracing the knees of Ulysses on his return, *ὑπόδρα ἰδών*.

Now, one may venture to suggest, in spite of what I make bold to call the inhuman irony of men like Pascal and his jackals who had hunted for him so long in the dark, that it is well,—that, as it seems to us, it is even a sort of religious act to stand on your guard against this spirit every where, though here on the river you may be tolerably safe from it, since in general persons under its influence do not obtrude themselves on parties such as ours, where lads with friends roam here and there so merrily. Such worthies, of a most animadverting humour, are not very likely to join them, unless, indeed, it be to weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain. They are rather for staying solitary at home, fretting and preparing a February face for some coming occasion. "There is," says a great author, "a certain state of inert asceticism, in which the soul, neutralized by the numbness which is foreign to what one may call the affair of living, becomes insensible to all human impressions, whether painful or agreeable. It seems to operate like a bad cold or sorry rheum; you can taste nothing, smell nothing, neither what is unpleasant, nor what is refreshing." When a mind of this kind does not try to persuade persons that they can best serve God by needlessly withdrawing from a world into which He himself had sent them, and by foregoing duties which He had expressly ordained they should fulfil, it is still advisable to be not too much discountenanced and dispirited by its influences; for the fact is, there may in some cases be a good deal of false assumption in regard to what it recommends,—imposition in such cases being a thing by no means impossible; since, as Balzac says, "he who you thought had fled

to the desert to give himself up to contemplation with fewer distractions, may have gone there, perhaps, through choice, or the constraint of circumstances that have grown round him, only to coin bad money with more security. Do not," he adds, "trust that feigned humility, nor the worn old clothes of that conscience-tormentor, who seems to be always preparing for death. Within he is all clad in purple, and has ambition enough for four kings." Indeed, such people, even when women too, as Dame Quickly said, are "given too much to allicholly and musing." Louis XIV. used to say of Charmel, the Jansenist, as Saint-Simon tells us, "that he gave himself up to intrigue and business more than before his retreat, and that his devotion consisted in keeping out of sight*." No doubt your grave stay-at-homes of this peculiar kind, whose presence is so effectual a remedy against any illness caused by too much jollity, who make excursions only with their tongues, "in labiis iniquis et lingua dolosa," are quite as likely to get into mischief as the poor hic-aways that go a-gadding on their feet. Alas! the sweet juveniles lead an ill life with them. "They lead a very frampold life with them, good hearts!" How harsh and despotic they seem, thinking that the universe revolves round themselves as its centre, becoming like that Duchesse du Maine who, in consequence of her fabulous state of mind in that respect, was said to have never so much as put her head out of the window in her life! But it is their professed systematic set of opinions on this point that must be guarded against. Now, as for this matter, we know sufficiently well from experience that as shades are needed in a picture to enhance its beauty, so to make life effective there must be grave as well as bright intervals, solid as well as light things interspersed; but it is obvious also, that if you smear your canvas all over with black, or make life one continuous prosaic and dolorous act, which after all you can only do like undertakers by painting your faces, and having your times and places for grim self-indulgence of some kind or other on the sly, you defeat all rational ends in regard to both. It is difficult to approve of such views, after reflecting for a moment on the unmistakeable indications, if we may venture so to say, of the character of our

* Tom. v. 123.

Creator, as seen in the beauty and usefulness of things; in the fitness of means to a beneficent end; in the constant eternal good sense of all parts of creation; and in the innumerable proofs of a kind and intelligent Being having had regard in the whole order and beauty of the world to the τὸ βελτίον, or meliority, as Bentley says, "above what was necessary to be;" for we see proof of many things being ordained for us simply because, in regard to our tastes and feelings, they constitute the τὸ βελτίον, and for the reason, too, that it is not only better in the general, but, for ourselves in particular, pleasanter that it should be so. As for your harsh sad people who overlook all this, "I can't," says a famous author, "make out these men at all. To my mind religion is a cheerful thing, intended to make us happy, not miserable; and that our faces, like that of nature, should be smiling, and that like birds we should sing and carol, and like lilies we should be well arrayed, and not that our countenances should make folks believe that we were vessels containing, not the milk of human kindness, but horrid sour vinegar." At all events it does not seem exactly to be the right thing for every one to resemble the Chevalier de Guise on the one point of his having such an aversion for roses that he could not see a flower of that kind without fainting.

We have hitherto had to reject many elements of an antagonistic kind which present themselves naturally to mar our serene hours; we have now, therefore, to meet others that are artificial, that are consciously called into existence by science, such as it is, and marshalled from principle against those who would enjoy them.

The first, then, of these elements, as we have said, is a sombre, dull, gloomy atmosphere, to which we are invited to acclimate ourselves, as to the vital air which it was intended we should all breathe, though

> "——— the bottom of a well
> At midnight, with but two stars on the top,
> Were broad day to this darkness."

At once we feel that it cannot be all serene with us in such a position. We are then in a circle "where every inconvenience keeps its residence, and every dismal sound its habitation."

"This place has too much shade, and looks as if
It had been quite forgotten of the spring
And sunbeams. Love affects society
And heat; here all is cold as the airs of winter,
No harmony to catch the busy ear
Of passengers; no object of delight
To take the wand'ring eyes."

In respect at least to their letting us down into such a region as this, one might suppose that these good people, whom we can only love but moderately, belonged to the school of Necker. speaking of which, Joubert, as Sainte-Beuve tells us, said. "Formerly people used to speak truth while laughing, but these men now say it always weeping, or at least with sighs and groans. To hear them, all truths are melancholy; and, accordingly, M. de Pange writes to me saying, 'sad as truth. No light rejoices them, no beauty charms them; every thing concentrates them*." Their order for the day on an excursion would be that every body is to be ashamed of every body; or rather, never joining such a party, they would like to imitate Antony after the battle of Actium, when he resolved to leave altogether the society of men, and to build on the island of Antirrhodos a palace which should be called his Timonium, to express his hatred for the whole human race. If they do not proceed quite to such lengths, at least they seem as much afraid and distrustful of laughter and jollity as the poor Tirynthians were after hearing the oracle, and forbidding any of the boys to be present at their projected sacrifice, though it is for a contrary reason to theirs, since it is their custom to do all things, however light, in a serious way, and not suffer any one to induce them so much as to smile†. It is pretty clear, too, that the proficients in the science which has rendered such dark frigid places what they are, will not be particularly favourable to either what Saint-Simon would call the "mécanique," that is, the actual material, or to the theoretic and intellectual part of our proceedings. Had they plantation of this isle, they'd sow it with nettle-seed. Their houses, as the ancients would say,

* Causeries, tom. vii. † Athen. vi.

" ——— are redolent with frankincense,
And pæans too, and groans at the same time*."

As for our public gardens, the parks being unassailable as royal property, they would be, no doubt, for treating them in the old prescribed fashion,—when disdain and indignation were called for,—ploughing them up, and strewing them with salt, as if it had been proved to satisfy a jury that every one who had ever walked in them on a summer evening, making them for the time being his own property, had been in some deep sense, understood by themselves, a traitor. The good-natured mayor, Mr. Hartapp, in a celebrated novel, had the fear of such censors strongly impressed upon him when he said, with such ingenuous simplicity, "Perhaps our poor operatives would thank us more for a little innocent amusement than for these lectures, which they may be excused for thinking rather dull. It is my belief that harmless laughter has a moral effect upon the working class, only don't spread it about that I said so, for we know excellent persons, of a serious turn of mind, whose opinions that sentiment might shock." A celebrated critic has lately proposed a question, which, on the hypothesis of having a sensible audience, we may venture to repeat without fearing any harmful consequence. He asks why some virtuous and learned ecclesiastics seem to be rather destitute of taste? and he cites the example of a right estimable curate of Paris, who, speaking of a certain very innocent, though recreative work, affirmed that it was apocryphal, and could not have been written by Fléchier, as being in its general tone unworthy of such a bishop. "I was struck dumb," he says; "the only answer possible would have been too long for such a meeting." There was, however, no more inconsistency between this light and harmless book, and the character of its author, than there was between the sanctity of Francis de Sales and the Introduction to a Devout Life, in which he spoke of La Bouquetière Glycera, though censors of this kind will not of course see things from his point of view.

But, whatever consideration may be due to them, as their motives no doubt are laudable, no one need wonder much if we should deem it necessary to demur as to admitting the principle

* Athen. x.

itself which has contracted those brows. The more you think about it, the less you will be inclined to value it. Probably, as already noticed, they who adopt it must have their grim smile sometimes, but who cares for it? There are many such people in these days, with melancholy in their recommendations of mirth, and perplexed between nature and pragmaticalness,—and that is the proper word,—for indeed religion, in any true sense of the term, is not engaged in the quarrel. Crassus is said to have been known once in his life to laugh, but for all that no one would withhold from him his title of ἀγέλαστος. And in the estimation of any of us such a title seems a distinction not greatly to be envied; there may be no great harm when it is only the result of natural constitution, as in the instances pointed at by the merry knight, saying, "A man cannot make them laugh, these sober-blooded ones." Though even then this sadness, by repeated relapses, may become naturalized, and take the right of citizenship with them,—can degenerate into a sort of nervous frenzy, and, in fine, produce a softening of the brain, paralysis, and death. So far there may be only occasion for the remark of the fox before the bust,—

"Belle tête, mais de cervelle point."

But when systematically assumed, by an act of mind and of volition, the antagonism we spoke of becomes from the first more apparent. Then, above all, there seems much truth in the remark of Cæsar when confronted with a man that could not be moved to smile at any thing, "Such men as he be never at heart's ease." It would be, perhaps, safer to trust one like that poor Abbé de Choisy, who did all he could during the last thirty years of his life to become serious and grave, without being able to prevent himself from continuing to be amiable and amusing; or one like Juliet's nurse's husband, though he were

"——— a merry man.
Rest his soul!"

Sir Solitary Plot hears laughing, and cries out,

"Who is it that laughs? Is there not some spirit here?
Is there not some plot upon me?

Cato was wise, and never laugh'd but when
Out of his casement he beheld an ass
Eat thistles. Where's the May-game? Will none answer?
Sure they did laugh, but I'll prevent 'em,
And vex their spleens. Away! I will not trust
A laughing vizard, there's a killing face
Behind it. Oh, the juggling of the world!"

Seneca pretends never to understand a joke; and yet Nature herself, by which we must mean its Creator, seems to understand it as well as the merriest of us. How else will you explain the braying of a donkey, pray? "This Seneca was," says Balzac, "one of those gloomy hypocrites who wish that play should be as serious as business, and comedies as grave as funeral sermons; but, for all he says, I hold with Mæcenas that the mind may be relaxed without being weakened, and that as there is a composed and melancholy folly, there can be also a free and joyous wisdom." But the truth is, the gravity of such people, if they could only dare to say it, is deeply hurt, seriously scandalized, on witnessing the playful side of creation. For their parts, they wonder how God can take pleasure or find amusement in making such odd, quaint-looking creatures, as some that you see in our zoological gardens. You may guess after that what they think of poor human diversions. Yet, "nothing in my opinion," says Pliny, who it may be supposed contradicts no Christian doctrine in saying so, "gives a more amiable and becoming grace to our studies, as well as manners, than to temper the serious with the gay, lest the former should degenerate into austereness, and the latter into levity. Hence I diversify my graver works with compositions of a lighter nature; and for this purpose I had chosen a convenient place and season for our amusement, having fixed on the month of July." It does not seem to be a just ground for our accusation of what is generally understood by Paganism when one subscribes to such passages as these. I believe it is an opinion admitted by those competent to speak on the subject, that the human race could not have been altogether and in every respect execrable when its Author came to restore and save it. Balzac was very Christian, and yet speaking of a person who through devotion, without any apparent reason for it, chose to inhabit a hole, a den, a tomb, rather

than a chamber, a place of perpetual night, adds, as if turnin the tables on him who should think so, "I confess to you tha this new grotto of the Sibyl filled me with horror and com passion."

Then, again, we have to avoid the formality and measure stateliness, or slowness, which, as a kind of mould for all speec and action, are similarly the result sometimes of principle an system, least offensive, perhaps, when they only make a man

> "Like one well studied in a sad ostent
> To please his grandam."

I never liked such demure, down-looked fellows, nor their sty of expressing themselves either, which seems to me to explai fully the force of that emphatic sentence of Lacordaire where h says, "By the grace of God I have all commonplace in horro Religion is one thing, but in our simple conjectures, conve tional proprieties, that cannot be made to laugh at their ow long faces, seem to be quite another thing. "It is certain," a a great author says, "that one end of virtue reaches to pride,— there is the bridge built by the devil." Do us, however, th honour to believe now that we are not exactly for recommendin any one to adore the flesh with all its animal spirits uncor trolled; but, for all that, we crave permission to say, that there are some souls which seem to make the human body look ver ridiculous, as in the "full solempne man," of whom it was sai that he had the air of a soul which had met with a body b chance, and had to get on with it as it could; which is a resul that we can hardly reconcile with the fulfilment of a divin ideal. These persons that compose the melancholy mess, must indeed, have rare understandings; for nature, we are told, re compenseth the defect of one part with redundance in another. These dismal ugly figures, that move so deliberately, and yet ungracefully, with an air of conscious importance, as if each o them carried the sacred things of Juno, to use the simile o Horace,—

> "Velut qui Junonis sacra ferret,"—

though it be only a newspaper they have in their hand or under their arm, are not exactly cut out for mastering spirits of the

common quirk. M. de Sacy goes farther, saying of such a one, "He was too regular and too methodic to know any thing about heaven." These good people have nothing, not the use of their senses, but by tradition. To a common eye, at least, there are some members of every profession whose especial office it seems to be to make it, however respectable, look like any thing but what becomes a man. Seriousness itself, in their persons, assumes a certain burlesque air; inspiring or edifying assuredly it is not. When one hears this sort of representation commended and extolled by others, one replies spontaneously with the nurse, humbly ducking under, as Coleridge says, with yet a resurgence against the check of her superiors,

"Yes, madam; yet I cannot choose but laugh."

However, the world is wide, and it is dangerous to have the least air of mocking any one. When such a person is overtaken, an achievement that does not require very long legs, the best thing is simply to say, "We two or three will walk and leave him to his graver steps."

Then still piercing below the surface, we come to the opinion which tends to produce these fresh results of an antagonistic kind. This opinion seems in its elements to be only a sort of echo of the song of the witches, without sex or kin,

"Fair is foul, and foul is fair;
Hover through the fog and filthy air."

But, as Vauvenargues said, "we ought not to be easily persuaded to believe that any thing which nature has made amiable is vicious. There is no age or nation that has not established imaginary virtues and vices." There is a mental sickness which puts some of us in distemper. Come, 'tis disease in them, not judgment.

"Pourquoi subtiliser, et faire le capable
A chercher des raisons pour être misérable?"

One ought not to overlook the fact that the action of body and soul together is the law in the operation of all human power. 'What is worthy and genuine is due to the energy, neither

of the human body alone, nor of the human soul alone, bu of both united, one guiding the other." "Je vous supplie," says St. Francis de Sales, whose words a man unlike him can not venture to translate, "pour l'honneur de Dieu, ne craigne point Dieu, car il ne vous veut faire nul mal; aimez-le for car il vous veut faire beaucoup de bien *."

"Don't talk to me," says Balzac, "of that gross imitation o piety which only seeks spectators, amusing the world with ges tures, movements of the head and eyes. This is a pure bodil action, and the easiest thing possible. The silliest can succee at the first trial, without ever having had a master, murmurin some confused words, or simply moving the lips, letting th eyes fall, or raising them up after counterfeiting sadness. Ther is a sort of false devotion more dangerous than that; I mea that trembling devotion, perpetually terrified, thinking tha God is only occupied in his blessed repose with preparin pains and penalties for nations and for men, which regard all maladies as possessions, and employs exorcists instead o physicians. It so weakens the mind and disheartens th courage, that persons of this kind do not dare to enjoy them selves in time of peace, or defend themselves in war; and know some of them who think themselves obliged in conscien to betray their own, and give advice to the contrary part because we are commanded to do good to our enemies." Th word "prud'homme," which was so dear to St. Louis, who use to say that it signified so great and good a thing that merely t utter it filled the mouth, was used in opposition to the idea of narrow and over-strict devotion. For Joinville it implied wha was enlarged and gracious, and full of good sense. It was th honour of some families to be distinguished by this quality in al their generations. Thus in Provence people used to say, "Proud hommie de Cabassole," and it is sad to think that such a family should be now extinct, as, unhappily, it is. The chroniclers o René d'Anjou, another prince who possessed it eminently, re gard it as synonymous with a combination of "religion an humanity †,"—saying, "en humanité et religion il oultrepassoi tous les rois de Sicile." It is a pity that we in England have n

* Lett. 107. † Bourdigné.

corresponding term; but it would be worse if we were threatened with a scarcity of the thing itself, and if we should actually come to want certain instincts that are essential to it; for, to glance at only one of them, "it is no doubt," as some one says, "the great mystery of life that, whenever any good quality is traced far enough up, it is found to involve bad consequences. Good and evil are interwoven not merely in our conduct and our feelings, but, as it would seem, in our very faculties and in the constitution of our minds; and it is almost impossible to think of any sermon, lay or clerical, that has ever been preached, without feeling that, fortunate as it might be for mankind if the preacher's advice were generally followed, it would be unfortunate if it were followed universally, that is, without the modifications which times and circumstances may possibly require in particular cases." As it is, however, who can doubt but that superstition, in the old sense, which is so opposed to these views, will sometimes try to mix with truth, rendering those who succumb to it, as Shakspeare says, "peevish, proud, and full of self-love," and, generally speaking, making minds miserable, and dwellings without bridegrooms?

> "Haud cuivis promptum est, murmurque humilesque susurros
> Tollere de templis, et aperto vivere voto *."

Heaven only knows the number of the victims to such secret difficulties! to such intrigues, perhaps; for where there is no sense of honour, there is nothing that you may not fear even in that way. How you seem uneasy, and fearful, and anxious, and sorrowful, and in one respect like Ulysses, "withered and faint-hearted,"

> ——— *οὐδέ ποθ' ὑμῖν*
> *θυμὸς ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ* ——.

Alas! heaven is supposed to rejoice in human sacrifices. The seer is not dead; nor are the ancient oracles, for all the Church can do, quite silenced in the human heart. Deaf to instruction, but what suits the fancy of the hour, or the resolve to stand by it afterwards, there are still heard the same generous words without cause for them, "It is not right that I should be fond of

* Pers. ii.

life. Shall a mortal oppose the Divine will?" There are stil the approving voices, uncalled for by the actual circumstances "Well hast thou spoken, ceasing to strive with heaven. Thou hast considered what is good and useful,"—though there all th while might have been heard the Church warning, and de nouncing rashness, and offering to bless and consecrate th choice that was renounced through fear of offending heaven But not to glance at such phenomena, there are persons me with every where who seem to scruple all things, as if one coul grant nothing to nature without robbing it from God. To hea them you might suppose that they wished to get rid of th senses, because the Supreme Being discerns things more per fectly without them, and that they endeavour to eradicate th passions He has given us because He is without them, both o which projects Butler designates as absurdities almost too gros to be mentioned. M. de Sacy cites in proof a great name, and says, "All that we like, Pascal detests or despises. All th helps that we require, even in religion, to avoid falling int doubt and discouragement, Pascal overthrows them. All th measures that we wish to keep with reason and with the world, even when deciding to live as good Christians, Pascal tramples them under foot, heaven knows with what insulting arrogance. He wounds our taste in every thing. And how must we hav wounded him! He would be more disgusted with our Chris tianity than with our incredulity or our indifference. His religion leaves not to nature a consolation, to self-love as a necessary element, a corner of refuge. His pitiless hand tears every bond that binds us to ourselves. If he calls to his aid philosophy, it is to finish our overthrow. To the irony of Montaigne he adds all the bitterness of his scorn. Be like the brute, he says; by doing so, what have you to fear, what have you to lose*?" There is reason to fear, however, that great mistakes of a practical kind are sometimes the consequence of such lofty views. Pride is apt to revolt against the will of the Apostle, who wills what they would render impossible or ridiculous, though it is in the order of nature, and to deem acquiescence in it an unworthy condescension beneath the human dignity.

* Variétés littéraires.

This is a spirit which, from ordinary breasts at least, must be eliminated, if our proceeding in these rambles is to have the desired result. No doubt, though we are not conscious of belonging to any body of conspirators against Christian antiquity, such as Pascal's friends supposed, all that we utter against this kind of devotion must, for obvious reasons, be received with caution; but still, in a general way, can it be reasonable to suppose that Heaven will be the loser? Can it be in harmony with its intentions to strip man of every thing that is commonly recognized as the constituents of a free, generous mind, of a warm and a great heart? to render him a cold, reasoning, calculating, partial moralist? Can it be wholesome to view mankind as composed of so many moving skeletons as in a kind of dance of death? It seems to be nearly the same thing when you affect to deny the existence of man's organic nature, attacking, perhaps, even music as an art too sensual; or when you seek to scan too closely, while all the time superficially, and with the eyes of a metaphysical anatomist, without genius to comprehend the whole, all men's feelings and impulses, all that in careless hours they say and do; and so judge of them as if expressly to satisfy that cold, sullen lady of whom we read,

> "——— And nothing but
> A soul purged from all dregs, and quitted from
> Mortality, can lay a worthy claim to her."

A celebrated French critic seems to demand as much from all of us, and through a motive that does not argue a very warm attachment to Christianity. For when analyzing with the unrivalled skill that he possesses the character of the writings of Chateaubriand, he would lead us to detect what he calls the profane fire which he thinks is concealed in it at all times, even amidst scenes and objects the most calculated to conduct him back to simple austerity. We have, of course, nothing to do here with the character of the author of the martyrs and of the genius of Christianity; such an analysis has no relation to our subject, and we may refuse to engage in it as irrelevant; but when this critic, who appears at times somewhat sceptical himself in matters of faith, goes on to generalize, and assign as one cause of the decline of literature the disaccordance, as he terms

it, arising from this concealed fire, which exists between th real inspiration of literature and the apparent result, when h speaks of the man of desire, of the prolonged and renewe desire of a terrestrial Eve, and calls this the profane and paga element, it is not wonderful that others, whose faith in revel tion is less doubtful than his own, should refuse to accept th justice of his distinction; and, in order to justify their refusa should refer him to the very text of the Bible which declare that it is not good for man to be left without that element fro which he, forsooth, seems for the moment to recoil with some what of ascetic aversion. Such censors would class every thin belonging to the human relations among the antagonisms t Christianity; but this it is which rather looks like bringin back paganism with its pride; for by your leave, paganism too at times, would be all mind, all spirit. If you question th assertion, look to the writings of Marcus Antoninus, the emper and philosopher, stigmatizing all pleasure*, requiring us t view nothing as nature presents it to our senses, but to stri every thing as it were to the bones, reduced to its first element in order that whatever seems most beautiful and worthy ma inspire loathing and horror†. Above all, look to the orienta systems, if you doubt it; or only refer to the Neoplatonia school of Alexandria, with its ecstatic doctrines, teaching tha one must cease to be man in order to be worthy of receiving th divine union; look to Porphyry, and Plotinus, and the rest o them, unfolding their views of spiritual perfection‡. Rolliard meeting such persons under a Christian garb, rallies them ne without just cause, saying, Leave this Stoicity alone,

> "You think I admire you all this while.
> Hark! when did you eat? Or do you hope
> Again, that you are put to this pitiful
> And desperate exigent?"

It would annoy them to be told—by the way, merely as a archæological fact, and without the remotest aim at censuring what has superseded it—that the rules of abstinence in the time

* Lib. ii. † Lib. vi.

‡ Albert de Broglie, L'Église et l'Empire Romain au IV. Siécle, iii.

of St. Benedict were so moderate, that when interdicting meat he seems to forbid only the use of the flesh of quadrupeds, and appears to allow that of all birds*. Yet if minds are sound, and views accordant with the teaching that we should all bow to, there is nothing to offend in such retrospects.

But you need not, as I said, even proceed to the East to find paganism, under the garb of austerity, deeming itself, as chemists would say, "the mother goodness." Cicero tells us that Chrysippus, not content with distinguishing man as excelling in mind, made the chief good to consist, not alone in that, but in having nothing else but mind; as if man were nothing, and should use nothing but mind†. But for all the sneers of some grave people, this wisdom, independent of its pride, was set at nought on the great day when God was born ineffably of the Virgin, taking our flesh, as the Church adds, "ut salvum faceret genus humanum." Accordingly, the poet is wiser than the sage, saying, in allusion to him,

> "Le ciel m'a dénie cette philosophie,
> Et mon âme et mon corps marchent de compagnie."

This is what is desirable on the occasions we are considering. "Non, non," says St. Francis de Sales, "Dieu n'est pas si terrible à ceux qu'il aime; il se contente de peu, car il sait bien que nous n'avons pas beaucoup‡." The ancient Christian society seems to have always acted on this principle, and we cannot do better than follow it. It is indeed in general an old religion that is wanted, which, like your old wine, warms the heart without inflaming the head. I would even add, that you must not hunt for new outlandish terms to stuff out a peculiar dialect, that if, at any time, you chance to meet some foreign phrase, you shall not straight rack your poor vocabulary to give it entertainment, but let it pass; and do not think yourself

* Greg. T., Hist. F. lib. v. ap. D. Bouquet. ii. 244. August. Thierry, Récits Méroving. 4e édit. t. ii. p. 70. Biblioth. de l'École des Chartes, 19e année, 4 série, tom. iv. 271. De la Nourriture des Cisterciens au XIIe et au XIIIe Siècle.

† De Finibus, iv.

‡ Lett. 53.

much damnified if you do leave it out, when neither your own tongue nor your country need it.

And here may one be pardoned for adverting, contrary to our usual habits, to an illustration that is quite, as the French say, "of circumstance," suggested by passing events. For at present, without even pricking up your ears, you can hear enough to convince you that this overstrained spirituality is a thing to be suspected. Who are these politicians that speak so eloquently about emancipating the spiritual from the inconveniences and vices belonging to the temporal! I think you will agree with me that it is not exactly the men who are really, or who in other matters even pretend to be, most devoted to the culture and interests of the soul. Nevertheless, if you have been one of these exclusive spiritualists, you are in part responsible for what they are saying and doing, and may blame yourself somewhat for the result. You would formerly have nothing to say for the body in the present world. Oh! of course not. Seeking the kingdom of heaven, you wanted nothing, and though heaven declared otherwise, you had need of nothing to be added. Well then, you must not wonder so very much if people who were aware of your doctrine, and who supposed that all Christians were of your way of thinking, should seek after a way of their own on a larger scale, after the fashion of Julian, after the style of the famous pamphlet, "Le Pape et le Congrès," to better the instruction, and leave you, as far as in their malice lies, nothing visible or tangible in which to enshrine, or as it were preserve incarnate, your faith, hope, and charity.

"God has made," says the religious Balzac, "of the same stuff sots and philosophers. That cruel sect which wanted to take from us the half of ourselves, in taking away our passions and our affections, instead of making a sage, made only a statue of him. These false serious people," he continues, "have spoiled the essential and the proper through dint of wishing to purify the material and earthly. They have destroyed the body in extracting spirit from it; they have robbed things of their natural countenance, their first and true form, the marks and signs by which they are distinguished.

These gentlemen have made a world of their own, a lawyer world, declamatory, dialectical, and sophistical; a world farther from the present, and more difficult to find in the map, than the Elysian Fields or the Republic of Plato. They do not indeed make all the metals gold and all the flowers roses, but they make all men doctors and all women philosophers." However, happily, the truth is, as an exaggerated idealist had the sense in a lucid interval to remark, "there is in things themselves a resistance which is not in ideas, else would the world not last six months."

At all events, whatever you may think of the complaints of Balzac, and however late it may be for some to unlearn the maxims he objects to, such people will hardly be found eligible on occasions of the kind we are concerned with. As Carlo in the Court Secret says,

"We love not to converse with spirits."

And Cowley would advise them for their lives to avoid such discipline, saying, while careless as to laying himself open to their inhuman shafts,

"Who nothing here but like a sp'rit would do,
In a short time (believe it) will be one too."

Of course there is elevation in that turn of mind. Its habitual region is high; it is even too high, or else, perhaps, what would be truer, not high enough; for, to use the simile of a great French critic, it resembles those mountains which exceed the mean height without reaching the sublime; the vegetation indeed ceases, but there is not the lustre of the eternal snow; it is grave, but monotonous, without the smiling graces of nature, but formal, and without features that can inspire pleasure of any description. We have lately heard the result of ascending six miles above the earth. The philosophic aeronaut lost all consciousness, and would have perished with his balloon but for the stronger constitution of his companion, who was himself so weakened that he had to seize the string on which both their lives depended with his teeth, having lost the use of his hands. It would be the same with you in the fields of religious speculation were you to seek a condition of existence that

is denied to your nature. As for the positive interests of a moral kind that are involved, though taking into account the little dependence that should be placed on such testimony as ours, it may still be a great question, even with the gravest, whether on the whole they gain much by the agency of such spirits, even when least extravagant. In time men hate that which they often fear. When all is said and done, the human way seems to be the wisest way, aye, what's more, that which is revealed to us as being the divine way. So impressed with this truth was the grave and virtuous De Tocqueville, that he wrote to M. Ampère, saying, "In proportion as I advance in life, I find that I have more esteem and even respect for the passions. I love them when they are good, and I am not very sure to detest them in themselves even when they are bad." Strict enough the persons we demur to may be in all conscience; as was observed on a former occasion, when showing up worldliness, that does not prove very much in their favour. The masterpiece of Corneille, the Cid, which Voltaire hated for its essentially Christian character, was, at the instigation of Richelieu, cited to the bar of the Academy for some love-scenes, and condemned as contrary to morality. It was then that the public voice justified the famous line,

"Tout Paris pour Rodrigue eut les yeux de Chimène."

Condemned, as Corneille himself said, by the decemvirs, it was absolved by the people, and the people, whatever might be muttered at Port Royal, were Christians too. Telemachus also was at one time for the same reason a forbidden book. No one at the universities durst read it while the old Jansenistic bitterness lasted, which turned into a sin the loves of Eucharis. "There are," says Balzac, who unlike some of us may be always listened to on such subjects without caution, "persons of difficult access, no way of living in peace with their ferocious virtue. They are like the furies whom the ancients call virgins. I wonder not that they love no one, since they hate all the world. This melancholy passion filling their whole soul, there is no room for other passions that are more gentle and humane. They fly from pleasure rather through aversion and disgust than from judgment and reason. They are so continually occupied

with being angry, that they have no leisure for enjoyment. Provided they are pure, they think they have a right to be malicious and malevolent." If an occasion presented itself, they would say with Caral,

> "My mind is opposite to all this courtship,
> And I had rather hear the tedious tales
> Of Hollinshed, than any thing that trenches
> Upon it ————————."

How such persons seem to lick their lips after saying something bitter against the affections of the simple human heart! "Their eyes," says a famous author, "are like the great magnifier at the Polytechnic, that shows you many-headed, many-armed, many-footed, and many-tailed awful monsters in a drop of water, which were never intended for us to see, or Providence would have made our eyes like Lord Rosse's telescope." "Puritans' eyes," he continues, "are like these magnifiers; they see evil in every thing but themselves, where," adds this author, "it is very apt to be found." Butler says of them,—

> "Still so perverse and opposite,
> As if they worshipped God for spite."

In truth, such characters do not seem to be much thought of where men religiously moved follow the wise old maxims that bespeak a profound knowledge of human nature. "The life of the saints," says Lacordaire, beginning with that of our Lord, "is full of affections. No one, I suppose, will say that our Lord did not love with the tenderness of predilection St. John and the Magdalen, and his mother, for whom He wrought his first miracle; and it would be strange if Christianity, founded on the love of God and of men, were to lead to dryness of soul in regard to all that is not God*." Then, again, there is the atmosphere of mortal dulness arising from views of this kind, which is to be eschewed, I think, as being in direct antagonism to the true serenity.

> "'Tis mighty wise that you would now be thought,
> With your grave rules from musty follies brought,

* Lettres de Lacordaire, p. 187.

> Through which some streaks, too, of divin'ty ran,
> Partly of 'sage,' and partly puritan;
> With tedious repetitions, too, you've ta'en
> Often the name of vanity in vain *."

Then what devotion to the absolute—to the abstract! Is it true? Is it false? I can't say; at such an elevation one is in the clouds. In opposition to these thoughts in general, we find the ancient Christian apologists invoking expressly "liberal ideas;" as where St. Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople, writing against the Iconoclasts, complains of their ridiculous trifling, and of their illiberal manner of proceeding—*ἀνελεύθερον*, —and of their moving young people to laughter at their morose and tedious extravagance †. Writing to Restitutus, Pliny still, in another instance, with a judgment unperverted by paganism, blames some two or three persons who at a party lately sat like so many deaf and dumb mutes, without moving a lip, or a hand, or once rising from their seats to shift their posture. "But to what purpose," he adds, "in the name of good sense, all this wondrous air of wisdom and solemnity, or rather, indeed (to give its true appellation), of this fastidious gravity? Is it not downright folly, or even madness, thus to lose a whole day merely to commit a piece of rudeness, and leave him an enemy whom you visited as a friend?" Perhaps, however, if such persons do talk, it will not much mend the matter. To use the quaint words of the author of the "New Custom,"

> "As fit a sight it were to see a goose shodde or a saddled cow,
> As to hear the pratlinge of any suche Jack Strawe."

Their graver hours will often excite wonder, when during these intervals, which constitute their normal state, others will only be constrained to say with a sort of indignant earnestness, "I prithee, now, deliver thy news like a man of this world." What is to be remarked, too, those others, in expressing such feelings, will have St. Francis de Sales to back them up; as when, for instance, alluding to one form of their indiscreet zeal, he says, "Above all things beware of relating false miracles, and ridicu-

* Cowley.

† Adven. Icon. Procem. ap. D. Pitra, Spicileg. Solesmense, tom. iv.

lous histories, such as certain visions, drawn from certain authors of a low order, and things indecently absurd, which can render our ministry blameable and contemptible*." Invite them to a garden, their looks suggest the question, addressed to them calmly and without the least bitterness,

> "Can the silver running fountains,
> And the cloud-aspiring mountains,
> Every grove, and flowery field
> But a new affliction yield?"

They feel hurt; their notions are shocked; they must withdraw. "What need this?" as Gerard asks in the old play, adding, "the fair ones will not blast you." Take them where you will, and it will be "duller than a great thaw." But as Gotharus in the Politician says,

> "If you permit these dark and phlegmatic
> Thoughts to usurp, they'll stifle your whole reason.
> Catch at the sun, divest him of his beams,
> But in your eye wear his sweet rays; let day
> Be when you smile ——————."

In ancient times there was found even a Stoic, the gravest of the grave, to say that philosophy should not be employed in detecting the faults of others, or in needless protests against public manners, or in condemning all that it does not itself practise, "nec hoc agat ut quidquid non facit, damnare videatur." Truly wiser counsel this, let who will have said it. After hearing it we may all, without the least evil intention, feel inclined, as Marcus says, in heroic tragedy,

> "To step out of these dreary dumps."

Every one who has not been sophistically tampered with, knows full well that there should be always a cordial alliance between conscience and good sense; and it will be pleasant to return to that wholesome state of things involving the common judgment with which poor Othello, even in his worst temptations, was constrained to speak in accordance, saying,—

* Lett. vol. i. p. 297.

"———— 'Tis not to make me jealous
To say, my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous."

But we have not yet reached by many a mile these clear sunny domains, and must proceed to wade through the silliness, from dark tangled principles, with which we are still surrounded.

Corneille, according to the remark of Vauvenargues, seems not to have known that great men are often characterized more by the things which they do not say, than by those which they do say. Our sententious and grave-talking people, with their set speeches each moment of the day, need to be reminded that this observation is true with respect to those who are genuine in their religion; for "true devotion," as Balzac says, "has more solidity than demonstration, like trees whose roots are longer than their branches. It has its seat in the understanding which is enlightened, which believes nothing low of the things of heaven, and has only very sound and very rational thoughts respecting that First Cause of which some men form such rash judgments." As for demonstrations, indeed, "the joy of piety," to use the words of a great thinker, "is of all kinds of happiness that of which the expression ought to be the most measured, and the most humble, before those who do not partake of it, and that for the reason involved in the Arabic proverb, which says, 'When you enter the house of a blind man shut your eyes*.'" "In general," says a celebrated Frenchwoman, "I believe that the mark of true greatness is never to dream of requiring from others the great things which one feels bound to perform oneself." She might have added with truth that it is a mark of Catholicity too; for this is what teaches us to make allowance for human weakness and for social necessities. But such views do not enter into the composition of what we are considering here. At all events, in a general way, silliness ignores the solidity of which Balzac speaks. "Arcanus hinc terror sanctaque ignorantia," though we are assured that religion, secured from human aberrations, does not subscribe to its verdict. As for the needless recurrence on every occasion to what

* Mdme. Swetchine, Pensées.

we call supernatural operations, the mediæval wisdom is expressly opposed to it. "Among the faithful and spiritual of this age," says Richard of St. Victor, "miracles are justly suspected, especially those of ostentation and no utility, which are said to happen to certain women, and may more justly be ascribed to demons than to God. For in these days there are persons, as the apostle says, who, attending to certain spirits of error, turn away their ears from truth, and apply to fables and rumours of novelties; and blessed Gregory says that perfection does not consist in working miracles, but in a man knowing true things respecting God, and thinking of other men better than of himself*." Then again, even while professing truth persons may be unable to deliver that truth, or even speak of it in a becoming manner; or they may be found expressing it one moment, and contradicting it unconsciously the next. "I don't speak of the doctrine of the preacher," says Balzac on one occasion, "it is holy and catholic; it comes from the ancient sources, and not from new cisterns. But doctrine is not every thing. It is not sufficient to know theology to be able to write theology; one must know how to think and write, which is another matter." Pascal even complained that it was too much the custom in his time to talk religion in society, as if he felt that people should be cautious of fatiguing minds by one attitude; and, besides, how easily does conversation on such subjects fall into mere formality or else to excess! "There's neither honesty, manhood, nor good fellowship in thee," said the witty knight. Where this can be truly predicated of any one, and the result traced to a principle, to a system, or to a turn of mind adopted with premeditation, disposed to argue in favour of what would put these qualities of human nature down, there is reason for graver persons than such as are here supposed to be present deciding on eligibility for the enjoyment of serene hours to break forth in exclamation. Now, there is such a thing as inculcating doctrines subversive of honesty, manhood, and good fellowship. The Duc de Saint-Simon, after describing his strange tête-à-tête with the Père Tellier at Versailles, and the enormous propositions which the latter maintained before him, shows us how

* In Cant. Cantic. c. xxi.

little serenity can be expected when one meets such arguer under any form. "I let him out of my cabinet," he says, "by the little secret door, so that no one saw him; and, as soon as closed it after him, I threw myself back into a chair, like a man who had lost his breath, half-stunned, and there I remained a long time by myself reflecting on my own state of astonishment and on the horrors which had caused it*." Such a scene involves no impossible hypothesis even in our times. There may be met people who can make us fall back like the duke, and for pretty much the same reason. You may talk for ever about dangerous men and dangerous books, and so forth; but the long and short of it is, that these are not exclusively open enemies to the right cause. There are such things as the severity, and the cruelty, and the coarse vulgarity, and the injustice, of many who pass for eminently good and respectable. Unless blind, you reject all evidence, you must admit the truth of what is said by a celebrated author, qualify him as you choose, that nothing is so terrible as what may be called "tout le mauvais du bon." Moreover, it is another result, which seems on a summer evening not a little deplorable, when a similar divorce is obtained between good sense and the principles that ought to encourage, inspire, and extend it. Yet this, too, is sometimes obtained; for, as a keen observer says, "by dint of wishing to exalt the supernatural order and the salutary influence of true belief, some writers, without perceiving it, annihilate the natural order, and absorb reason in faith. This," he adds, "is what I call an exaggeration of ideas, and a logical drawing astray of the most dangerous kind. Enough, enough, one is tempted to say to them each moment. He who wishes to prove too much proves nothing. Besides, in truth, is it not ascribing too noble a part to their adversaries to give them up, as their own domain, reason and the natural order, with a reserve of thundering upon them from the supernatural order†?" As for their formal denunciations, it might seem often to a common Christian, things being well considered, that there was no great necessity why they should be at the cost of so much breath. "Being invited to a wedding, the Barbon made a long discourse in

* Mém. tom. xi.

† Variétés littéraires.

favour of celibacy, and even in condemnation of marriage, forgetting, of course, nothing that Euripides had written against women, and pronouncing his commendations as if he wished to represent Hippolytus. He said that St. Jerome and Tertullian had flattered the opposite party, and had not sufficiently got up their zeal on the occasion,—that they have forgotten half of what ought to have been said for the interest of angels and spirits against animals and nature." How greatly the serenity of that hour must have profited by such discourse! And yet there are still some who would be inclined to say with Orgon, mistaking a blind confidence for a true rational and religious serenity,

> "Qui suit bien ses leçons, goûte une paix profonde,
> Et comme du fumier regarde tout le monde.
> Oui, je deviens tout autre avec son entretien;
> Il m'enseigne à n'avoir affection pour rien,
> De toutes amitiés il détache mon âme;
> Et je verrois mourir frère, enfants, mère et femme,
> Que je m'en soucierois autant que de cela."

Upon the whole this sort of doctrinal silliness, if one may coin such a phrase, interposes its voice to spoil every thing. The Count de Maistre had even to combat it in one instance on liturgical grounds, when he said, "Be not scrupulous; God understands Greek, and you may allow the Catholic Church to preserve its usage in the Greek rite." It interposes, in regard to every subject, to put an end to a serene hour. It would not allow you to open Virgil or Horace, though the holy Fathers, whose Christian austerity is so well known, were impassioned protectors and propagators of the ancient classics*. It would not allow you to speak in praise of philosophy, though the same Fathers, as in the instance of St. Clement of Alexandria, of St. Basil, and St. Augustine, defend it from the charges of such violent zealots, and expressly call it the schoolmaster for the Gentiles as the law was for the Hebrews, to conduct both to Christ†. It suspects and disparages all profane literature,

* Ozanam, La Civilisation au Cinquième Siècle, 95.

† Id. 292.

though the Church in every age has accepted its services both as a preparation and as a demonstration. It brings, in an evil sense, a universal disenchantment. Not to speak of its paralyzing the fancy, to which we all owe so much innocent enjoyment, it disables the man under its influence from being ever at rest. As with superstition, "quietus esse nunquam potest." But what's enough for our purpose to remark, it needs in the lowest and smallest relations the advice that a certain wise man of the ancient world once gave to his friend, saying to him in a letter, "You complain of being disgusted lately at a certain entertainment by a set of buffoons, but let me advise you to smooth your brow a little. It is true such pleasantries are not to my taste, but how many dislike our kind of amusement? Let us bear therefore, my friend, with others in their recreations, that they in return may show indulgence to our own."

After all, to common observers, however greatly and justly they may distrust themselves, it does not seem very objectionable if people only ask for an indulgence and a sensibility which can be witnessed, as gravest writers remark, both in our Lord—though I feel that, with head bowed in the dust, pardon should be entreated for naming Him in such pages—and in holy Job. Richard of St. Victor even draws an argument to prove what is reserved for us in another world, from the amazing condescension to meet our common notions and ways manifested in the life on earth of the Incarnate God. "Our Lord," he says, "with all his tremendous power came eating and drinking in common, not alone with men, but with cattle. If the Lord of angels, then, for the sake of man, is made a participator of the wants of animals, why should not man, on account of Him, become a participator with the angels? Who will despair of man's coming to partake of eternal delights, since the Lord of Majesty, on account of man, descended to the delights of flies, as in the words 'butyrum et mel comedet*?'" Then, turning to the earlier example proposed to the human race, what a contrast do we see in it to the proud affected insensibility of Stoics when confronted with the mysterious passions, sorrows, difficulties, wants, and aspirations of our nature! We have heard

* De Emmanuele, lib. i. c. xiv.

sung, alas, how often! the lessons in the office of the dead. Have we ever fully comprehended why they were chosen for such an occasion? "One sole sublime sentence has procured for Job," as a great French writer says, "in the popular estimation the reputation of having been the perfect model of patience and resignation; but when we come to study the book carefully we find that such was not his character. He is found to struggle with grief, one moment firm and the next falling; doubting of God and of his justice, and the next minute invoking Him. He is much more the symbol of suffering humanity than the ideal type of heroism and resigned martyrdom. We see in him the man who wishes to examine and to philosophize. The great question of the origin of evil is proposed and sifted. Job is not a passive martyr. If he supported the first shock, his soul does not long retain this heroic and superhuman serenity. He sounds his conscience, he thinks his misfortunes unmerited. Why does infinite goodness permit evil? why does infinite justice suffer innocence to suffer? He doubts at moments, and this doubt is his most cruel torment. He seems to revolt against the solutions of that traditional faith of which his friends are the self-constituted champions. He winnows their explanation, he thinks for himself, he invokes God to answer, after his false friends have embittered his afflictions with their reproaches and their explanations. It is then that Jehovah appears in the midst of the whirlwind, and closes the drama. He condemns the friends who sought to glorify Him at the expense of Job,—praising Him with their lips only while offending Him by the hardness of their hearts, pretending to explain what they did not understand, and imposing on the sufferer a faith which they had not themselves. As for Job, God pardons his vehement but sincere complaint; He does not reveal to him the cause of his misfortunes, but He overwhelms him with a torrent of sparkling images of the prodigies of creation, all incomprehensible; and when He has convinced him of his nothingness, and of the impenetrability of the divine ways, He restores to him, in double measure, his goods, his health, his children, and all that he had lost. So God pardons this thinker, weak in faith, who seeks the truth in agony and tears; He blesses him, and condemns the false devout,—with their canticles which rise not from the

heart, and with all their baggage of truths with which they wished to overload the bruised reed. Such is the moral of the book of Job. God every where present, whether veiled or visible, his justice in the end manifested with his power. To the soul in sorrow, to all who wander in mourning and anguish of spirit, it offers an anchor and a compass. It shows the Divinity in heaven, whose ways are unsearchable but sure, and who holds in reserve, along with the mysterious source of tears, the treasure of ineffable benedictions*."

But to proceed with our consideration of dispositions still arising, inordinately as we deem, from true principles, or at least that are sometimes used in what seems to us to be a tangled, forced, and unnatural combination with them, which disqualify persons from the enjoyment of which our friends seek to partake.

It is the remark of Athenæus, that "most philosophers are of such a disposition that they are more inclined to evil-speaking than the comic writers†. These former," he adds, "believe that there is no such thing as an honest counsellor, or a conscientious statesman, or a respectable sage, or a poet worth listening to, or a reasonable people." "Sots and fools," says the free-spoken, high-minded, and religious Balzac, "are much more unjust than sinners." Be that as it may, there are among tragic, clever, and learned men also some, beyond all doubt, who can beat the latter at that play,—men who adopt lofty principles, and follow them, as we conceive, through a mist of their own raising up, very haltingly, or, rather, who employ them in such a way that the general result is not exactly favourable either to the correction or to the serenity of those who are thrown amongst them. It is true indeed, as Jules Janin once replied to myself, the profane in these times keep so constantly tapping on good religious people, that we cannot wonder if in the end these latter should evince more irritation and severity in the way of reprisals, than can agree with our notions of what suits their character; but then, on the other hand, it seems pretty evident that amongst these respectable persons can be at times discovered some who give provocation, or who rather too closely

* Louis Ratisbonne, Impressions littéraires. † Lib. v.

resemble that M. Génin, of whom St. Beuve says, "he was no doubt himself a man of probity; but in his prejudices and fits of ill-humour, he was also one who would not perhaps have very much to do to become wicked*." At all events, there are men of this class, whose very scruples seem enlisted against the interests of wise and humane enterprises, and surely the way before them is then slippery enough. Indeed, holy men of great hearts will tell you, with a sort of sorrowful smile, that obstacles to vast and generous works, even of the religious order, and especially when concerned with the exercise of charity, come often from the pious. Pious people, unless well brought up in an old fashion, and accustomed to study with good sense ancient models, appear to others to be rather apt to take the edge off all natural good impulses, to render torpid and inactive the seeds of generosity that still remain scattered from the first divine sowing of human nature; and their artificial subtitutions do not always compensate, at least in a manifest way, for the mischief that visibly ensues in consequence. Besides, what is worse still, there are the hangers on. Every army has a tail, and as a late author remarks, "it is the tail which is guilty of the chief horror. We know what are its component parts in common warfare, beings like bats, half brigands, half valets, engendered by the twilight of battles." In the sphere of religious matters, perhaps, they are not much better. We cannot, therefore, avoid noticing for rejection the spirit which seeks to combine truth and high principle with inhumanity and all the faults, mistakes, and errors, if not vices, that follow in the train of that spirit.

We had occasion before to reject the disposition which naturally, and when left to itself, loves to censure, to accuse, and to condemn. Here it meets us under a worse form, and wearing a mask,—exercised in the name of what is most august, most merciful,—and tracing itself from true principles and from faith. It will be best to have none of it in the boat with us; bad as we may be so far, we should not be the holier for it. It would make the worst more perverse, and the best unhappy. In England, at least, we can shame it by pointing even at the

* Chateaub. et son Groupe littéraire sous l'Empire.

law of the state, which seems always to favour the accused party, all its tendencies being for the defence; it being necessary also that for a condemnation in a criminal cause the judges should be unanimous. Such traits can enable one to understand how a German could have written, as some one has lately done, on "the poetry of law," for charity is a poetic world, and the least trace of it unfolds an idyl. But it is a different spirit that animates these grave and reverend seigneurs; they seem to have but one maxim, "taunt him with the licence of ink, with gall enough in it." Only possess but a tincture of humanity, of moderation, and of poetry, which, I repeat it, is often the same thing as charity, and you will soon hear from one of these characters such words as "you are idle, shallow things; I am not of your element." To the last drop of their ink they will maintain this opinion. Perhaps you will be honoured with a public notice by them, and, if so, I warrant there's vinegar and pepper in it. "Eh quoi! que pourroit-il y avoir de manque après que tant d'habiles gens y ont passé?" You will be set down as one of these 'habiles gens'—no great compliment as they understand it. For all men but themselves they have a style of scorn and disparagement all "pus, prose, atque venenum." And then only to think of the insane lengths to which some of these good men, in their contempt for humanity, and sentiment, and the human conscience, will suffer themselves to be carried, while logically faithful in other respects to the most lofty principles! You will have a grave man, a learned man, a man writing with a most excellent and even charitable purpose—himself perhaps member of a society renowned for its erudition and its talents at least, if not for its tendency to favour genius and poetry, who will repeat without a word of comment or of blame some sentence that your whole nature revolts from, as in an instance formerly noticed where it was a question of punishing the guilty *. But can any one wonder that we, finding ourselves among the flowers or bulrushes, object to qualities which have such an effect as this, which is enough to make the gentlest of men, and most inclined to religious reverence, exclaim with Timon,

* Pet. Bagonel, Speculum Divitum, de bono Divitiarum usu ad coctum promerendum, vii. p. 56.

"There's not a whittle in the unruly camp,
But I do prize it at my love, before
The reverend'st throat in Athens?"

Why put it in the power of such people as ourselves to talk about the faults of the good? They would find it so easy, so rational, so divine, so pleasant to avoid them! Why should not a man, though he be a prefect of studies and professor to boot, be able to write a letter like a gentleman? What does philosophy or Christianity gain by his showing himself ill-humoured and worse mannered, abusive, vituperative, caustic, sarcastical, and in such a way vastly clever? As the Duc de Saint-Simon demands, "Is not an innocent ignorance preferable to an instruction that retains so little charity?" When Pericles spoke against popular men, he seemed to all to be himself popular and agreeable. Why should not all pious people—many of them, in every age, have tried and succeeded—resolve to form for themselves a style something of that kind? There is nothing easier than to effect wonders by a temper of conciliation, if you have only a mind to it, comprising among these wonders the not compromising an iota of truth. There ought to be nothing easier also than exercising an influence like that attributed to Scaurus, who, when he spoke for an accused party, there was such innate authority in his words, that you would think, as Cicero says, he was not pleading a cause, but merely giving evidence. This is the style of gentlemen, of Christian statesmen, as well as of good fellows. What should shame many is the fact that the kind of eloquence which belongs to truth has no oratorical or forensic points. It might be described in the words of Cicero, "Nihil iratum habet, nihil invidum, nihil atrox, nihil astutum:" in fine, he likens it to what these men, who write like troopers or prize-fighters or braggart captains, profess, in other respects, an exclusive admiration for; for, he adds, that it resembles "a certain chaste virginity." But what is their style? It is to turn others to ridicule, to riddle them with injurious epigrams, to treat them even perhaps as public malefactors; when once engaged this way, it is not a courteous tournament, it is a massacre, a butchery. Tabaraud, in his Supplement to Cardinal Bausset's Histories of Bossuet and

Fenelon, says, that "attacks and personalities have, unhappily, become the current coin of religious criticism." The precision of the terms is questionable; but I wonder if it was in allusion to what he means by them, and to spirits of this kind, that Balzac said, "better receive a poisoner than such doctors, better have magicians, open declared enemies of truth, than those faithless servants who wear the livery of Jesus Christ, and take his wages only to betray Him." Perhaps all this is done unconsciously. This zeal is sincere, this hatred from principle, yet still we are bound to believe that offences against charity, let the provocation be what it will, must be the worst kind of treason against Him who we are told "is love." Our Shakspeare calls it "irreligious piety," and the old philosopher even ought to shame those evincing it, when he says, "succumbunt vitia virtutibus, si illa non cito odisse properaveris*."

Be that as it may, however, this disagreeable disposition, which involves a contempt for humanity and for the common natural duties of life, and which excludes men from all participation in the kind of enjoyment that we are longing for, did not manifest itself yesterday for the first time. St. Augustine had to censure it in his time, and he was bitterly condemned by some for doing so. He persisted, however, and said, "If a father should disinherit his son, in order to enrich the church with what he ought to have left to him, let him seek another Augustine to receive the legacy, or rather, God grant that he may find no one†." In another form, in a later age, Balzac had experience of it exercised against himself. "These fathers," said he, "that war against me, are not Christian Ulysses, who have nailed their passions to the mast of the cross of Jesus Christ;" but so it is generally with them. A Comenius might say to each,

> "——— though thou speak'st truth,
> Methinks thou speak'st not well."

Yet it does not follow that it is even always truth, after passing thus through their crucible. "My opponent, who shows such

* Seneca de Beneficiis, lib. v.

† De Vita Clericorum suorum, Serm. 355.

an utter ignorance," said Balzac, "has succeeded to the place of St. Bernard, and he has translated the works of St. Denis. His predecessors were doctors; he himself presides over a great troop of theologians, and no one has warned him of his error, or dispensed me from the danger of having to correct him thus."

We cannot proceed further through this part of the disagreeable subject without citing the words of an eloquent orator, which, by reason of other passages in connexion with them, have had, of late, so wide an echo. "These sanguinary declamations, inserted in certain religious journals," says Montalembert, "intercalated between some pious articles, cause a repugnance which is one of the rudest trials of an honest man. It is like hearing in an oriental night the cry of the jackal between the cooing of the dove and the refreshing murmur of waters. For my part, I say it without hesitation, I have in horror an orthodoxy which takes no account of justice and truth, of humanity and honour; and I should never grow weary repeating these recent words of the Bishop of La Rochelle,—'Would it not be well to make many catholics attend a course of lectures on virtues of the natural order, on the respect due to our neighbour, on loyalty towards one's adversaries, on the spirit of equity and charity? The virtues of the natural order are essential virtues, from which the Church herself cannot dispense us.'" The good bishop, as well as his eloquent admirer, makes no mention here of honour or friendship; as if they thought it impossible for intrigue, underhand, serpentine ways of acting and directing, and abuse of intimacy, by any contrivance of diplomatic subtlety to wear the garb of religion, or to be in reality associated in men otherwise amiable and alien from all human perversity, with a conscientious sense, however mistaken, of fulfilling all the while a religious duty. I wish I could believe in this impossibility; I wish the sweet dream of an unsuspicious life could be protracted till death. But there are personal inabilities which it is only honest to proclaim; and this, unfortunately, is with some persons one of them. However, the wise prelate and his friend, though they omit details, seem in a general way to have felt profoundly the truth to which the ancient poet so nobly appeals in the words of Helen,—

αἰσχρὸν τὰ μέν σε θεῖα πάντ' ἐξειδέναι,
τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μὴ, τὰ δὲ δίκαια μὴ εἰδέναι *.

"'Tis base indeed that thou shouldst know all things divine, what is and what is not, but not know things just."

The last error or abuse, according to some persons' view of things on this side that may be noticed, is one which they conceive to be not more opposed to charity than to what they believe to be matter of great importance. It consists in what seems to them to be an exaggerated and erroneous estimate of the facts involved in the religious differences which divide the Christian civilization. These differences are sad things after all our philosophy. One is often tempted in some countries, as in Ireland, where they are developed with such passion, to consider them the source of all the social miseries that afflict mankind, but they are not exactly always and every where what many well-intentioned persons would worry us into supposing; for, in the first place, do you think, as Lacordaire demands, that people are always as culpable before God as they appear to us? Do you suppose that, living in the midst of a society where the mind is without ceasing assailed by error, the responsibility or even character of sentiments and actions are the same as at epochs when truth alone instructs and governs the world? And in the second place, these differences generally exist in combination with much that is true, that unquestionably they ought to revere, and which we ourselves ought to be the last to undermine or weaken in others. Indeed, this is so true, that a person worthy of speaking on such a theme might say, in many cases, that Catholicity is precisely what they themselves dreamt of with pleasure in the days when they were opposed to it. And here many similitudes might be adduced which would explain our meaning. For instance, if the whole truth were told by travellers, I believe it would be found that what we English, on going abroad, like most in the scenery of foreign countries when we visit them, is something that, under a form which is new for us, puts us in mind nevertheless of what we loved at home in dear old England. That poor grey ruin, for example, on

* 923.

the hill, that path by the river, that stile on the road-side, leading into a wood; that shady lane at the entrance of the village, that solitary church, that blue horizon, that babbling stream with the plank across it—all of these objects are only a French, German, Italian, or Swiss version, as it were, of what was familiar to us from our childhood; but then one must confess also that generally this version of an old favourite comes, for some reason or other, nearer to the ideal of what we loved than the original ever did. There is somehow more meaning in it; there is besides generally more sun in the picture, a warmer tone of colouring; there is more history in it, more antiquity, more pleasing terror, more that we cannot fathom, more mystery, more romance, if the term be allowed, and in some instances more sublimity. Now all this holds in religion. The Catholic Church, for those whose youth was passed out of it, comes upon them like a familiar image transformed, like a remembrance of what was best loved in their early days; but it is a remembrance that is allied with an increase of attraction in the subject; as, in point of fact, it is the Catholic view which imparts reality, and meaning, and legitimate cause for wonder, to what they once loved and reverenced, without much exercise of logic, and merely as children, without fully possessing even the power of enjoying what they beheld, and heard, and wished to love, and to admire, more than strict truth, at that time, would have given them grounds for. Moreover, these evils are often hereditary, rather than self-procured; more what men think they cannot change, than what they choose. They grow too in them against the grain as checks and disasters, or to use the poet's words,

> "As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap
> Infect the sound pine, and divert his grain,
> Tortive and errant from his course of growth."

Besides, there is the consideration of the moral worth which often accompanies such aberrations in one who is like a star disorbed. Now, as a great French writer justly remarks, "reason demonstrates that virtue is a brilliant result of the apparition of truth in the conscience. Consequently, in itself, it is a conviction, which has power over the heart and the will." Therefore, upon the whole, it certainly seems to us that the

interests of truth, with respect to these divisions, will dictate the same language as would be suggested by a simple desire of serene hours—no abuse of what has once been believed, no attempt to overthrow that belief. These combined interests, to the best of our judgment, lead to this conclusion, when it is a question of passing to the side of Christian antiquity, and of being reunited to the main trunk, that all which had been taught of positive within the modern branches severed from it —for no one can include under that title sheer defamation and misrepresentation of facts and doctrine,—should be respected, loved, and practised, if possible, more than ever by those who are invited so to pass and be reunited; only with a reserve which seems very reasonable, however painful in its possible consequences with regard to a worldly position; namely, that letting instructions enter where folly now possesses, it is necessary to leave the association of those who, after believing and teaching so much truth, are obliged by a logical and fatal necessity to proceed on farther, beginning as if after a fresh start in a direction wholly opposite to that in which they set out, to calumniate like any vile wretches of the world, to deny without reason, and, what is worst of all, to blaspheme; thus entering upon new ground, purely, and sometimes execrably profane, on which it were irreligion to accompany them, ground wholly unconnected with that which they proposed to follow in the beginning, hostile to all that they had been wisely and virtuously invited to pursue by their own leaders, and over which it can never be the suggestion of religion, of genius, of poetry, or of the simplest humanity, under any circumstances, or in any common natural sense of the words, to keep any one, born of woman, company.

So far we have been objecting to certain dispositions which experience, as we conceive, proves, may be combined, in an inordinate way, with true principles, twisted, entangled, and conundrummed, as we believe, in the sphere of what is divine. It remains for all lovers and advocates of serene hours to take into consideration the claims of other qualities which are associated with contrary principles in regard to the same region of thought, and which, in fact, often of necessity result from those principles which cannot be brought within the terms of any

category; for, as Marivaux said of another subject, our age may begin a definition of them, but it cannot be finished before the end of the world. These qualities, which, in spite of their logical inconsistency, are capable of being represented under a mask by the calm and cautious, though not less magic pen of Sainte-Beuve, as compatible with one form of a noble and enlightened Christianity, present to the lover of serene hours a difficulty of no less magnitude than that arising from the former; therefore these latter qualities also, we now proceed to suggest, even from the mere desire of realizing our object on these occasions of recreation, and without any reference to graver motives that we believe will always and every where exist, must be with no less care eliminated from our own minds as well as silenced at least from tact and wise reserve in those with whom we are to be for the time associated. Let us continue to keep to our part of observers who wish to be exact; and truly no reader, however nervous, need be frightened at this turn of our enterprise; for when resolving, as far as possible, to avoid all danger of disturbing good humour by rough or boisterous and unmannerly proceedings, we have in presence to keep us to our good resolutions no less eloquent a preceptor than Father Thames himself; for, as the poet Gray, when speaking of him, remarks with great justice, "rivers which have lived in London and its neighbourhood all their days, will not run roaring and tumbling about. No; they only glide and whisper." Besides, mere roamers as we are, in search of the serene, harmless river and field birds, why should we show ourselves aggressive against persons of any denomination? We must leave this attack to others, who in pursuing it will be playing their parts. We are not men for war. We would gladly hand into our boat, or invite to sit on the bank with us, the very individuals whose principles we object to. Be theirs the shade or the sunshine along with us, and a hearty welcome, or an affectionate farewell. That is our mode of attack, so far as concerns the men themselves.

It is a remark of Cicero, that all the things which he had laid down respecting the proper conduct of an oration, by the introduction into it of certain thoughts and words of a particular kind, were not more necessary to render agreeable a speech in

public than all kinds of discourse: "Non majora forensium actionum quam omnium sermonum condimenta sunt." Extending the idea to our particular subject, one might say conversely, that all the things laid down for us by others elsewhere, as necessary for the conduct of life, with a view to the felicity of the soul hereafter, are no less required here by ourselves for temporal peace and for the pleasures even in this world of a few serene hours; that all which is to be fled from in the higher regions of thought, for philosophic or religious reasons, and renounced with a view to the interest of the future existence, is to be rejected also, though it were with an exclusive regard for thorough enjoyment in the present life, whether in common conversation or in the secret recesses of the mind; and that what endangers in this supereminent sphere is a thing to be got rid of, irrespective of its more important tendencies, and as if solely from conviction of its being subversive of the sweetness of a bright, peaceful hour. This conclusion, by the way, ought to lead some of your grave seniors to appreciate, in a far higher sense than they have hitherto done, the value attached to our general enterprise, when seeking to turn to account such rambles as ours; showing how many arrows, that they may have thought shot off idly at random into the air, were directed with a steady aim to a positive and most important object. Hitherto they may have thought that the present book might be likened to that extraordinary structure on the top of Killiney Hill, around which, however, a true taste for the picturesque is most delightfully developed; of which structure, as the author of A Little Tour in Ireland says, the builder himself confesses that he knows not what it is, placing on it this inscription, "Last year being hard with the poor, *this* was erected." And to say the truth perhaps, at first, on being put to the question, the literary architect could hit upon no better title to qualify it, when called upon to give a scientific analysis of his present composition. But now, after collecting his thoughts a little, he might attempt to effect the said analysis somewhat in this way, and when one hears his purpose explained in such a grand philosophic style, it really rather raises one's self in one's own estimation. He might say then, that the object he had in view was to show that what we are told by the highest authority is

equired by our chief and primary, and as it were supernatural uties, is, in most cases, what is required for our own enjoyment; and that what is generally thought, without any reference to them, to be disagreeable, has an ulterior result, proving etrimental, if not fatal, to the gravest interests of the intelctual and spiritual life. He might go on to say that his bject throughout from the beginning, if the good part of the cret may be told, though of course there were here and there nd idle fancies at work also in the depths, was to undertake ne of Hercules' labours, which was to enlist ordinary motives, id what are esteemed by light, giddy young people, common ay interests, in the service of high principles and of a great use, which can employ such hands even as ours to begin or complish what may be termed its rough work,—that it was to ggest, while indulging in certain memories, and seeking a w pleasant hours, this thought—that not alone the preambula, it the tenets and practices of the Christian religion, as understood and received by Christian antiquity; or, as a recent critic alifies them, "the conditions of a certain arrangement of a rtain ordinance which has been gradually developed," do, in a ultifarious way, and to an extent in details of which few are nscious, conduce to the formation of the sort of characters at most people like best, and also to the enjoyment of what, common life, are felt to be the happiest hours. Now surely ch conclusions, if exact, are very important, and sufficient to title "This" to some consideration. Many of us at least will ink it a most plenteous crop to glean in this way the broken rs after the man that reaps the main harvest. Inadvertently, o, while proceeding thus, we may arrive, I think, at some rious and useful discoveries, that ought to please no less the id venerable seniors. For example, some persons imagine at it is all a religious difficulty, a difference in religious views, at makes Christianity divided as we see it, causing men to eak and write of each other after the amiable, noble manner of e polite English journals. It may be so still in a few irregular stances; for there is no accounting for human wanderings, and naticism at all events is a plant that can never be wholly tirpated from the soil; but, in general, there is reason to ink that it may not be so, for all our theological denomi-

nations, which I might name oftener if the words were not over-worn; but that the real, secret cause of this division, wi its beautiful results, is precisely the very same thing whi prevents persons from being thought good fellows on the riv agreeable companions in the garden, and even pleasant partne in a dance. It is the remark of Hazlitt, that "in general t principle of dissent arises more from want of sympathy a imagination than from strength of reason. We may observe," says, "a hardness and stiffness in the ideas of those who ha been brought up in this way,—an aversion to those finer a more delicate operations of the intellect of taste and geni which require greater flexibility and variety of thought, and not afford the same opportunity for dogmatical assertion controversial cabal *." I cannot help thinking, therefore, times, that without alluding to men "of an enlightened n and of an atrocious soul," to use the words which Gibbon thou applicable to certain chiefs like Calvin, what makes all this cious turmoil, leading sometimes to broken heads, and what even worse, to broken hearts, may be simply the privation in s of æsthetic development, a want of the sense of beauty; or may be an absence of a youthful spirit and of a love for natu it may be insensibility to innocent pleasure, or else vic habits, rendering the mind and heart inapt for all that is of the daily routine of life, or worldliness, or misanthropy, contempt for what is common, or injustice, intolerance, and loyalty, or materialism, or intellectual pride, or pedantry, o spirit of sectarian aversion conjoined with general irrevere under the disguise of enlightenment and liberality. It may to some one or other, or perhaps to all of these things togeth already objected to as severally antipodal to serene enjoym that we must look very often for the real point of the embarra ment; and therefore, even with a view to the highest of human interests, to those of the next life, it might be well leave for a while your old theological apparatus, with all its quisite adaptations to some delicate and purely mental operati and having recourse to what the French call in general an her remedy, to apply yourself to matters that seem quite of a differ

* Round Table.

order, things that belong only to boats and horses, and recreation and idleness; and giving up all wishes to be thought cunning in controversies, or in the very knots of divinity, to try, in the first instance, before attempting any thing greater, and in the absence of any doctor who could decide the question rationally and logically skipping occasionally to the mathematics and demonstration, to try, I say, first and foremost to induce people to aim at being right good fellows and pleasant companions, capable of enjoying within their own hearts, and of enabling others to enjoy in their society, the sweets of serene hours; after that you would find perhaps that the religious difficulties dwindle almost to nothing or wholly vanish, without your having once consulted Milner or Bellarmine to see the tainture of their nest.

Why this method, apparently so eccentric, should succeed; why it should be often necessary to proceed in a way so little grave, at least, so little consonant with the formality of your old respectable practitioners, is no doubt more than any one can undertake to explain in all cases; but there are some instances in which it would not be difficult, without a hundred eyes, to discern the connexion. For example, take the case of "talented" men who, even seeking perhaps to please you, for some purpose or another best known to themselves, employ their pens in satirical representations of the religion of the old trunk still professed on the Continent,—"sicut dies sæculi et sicut anni antiqui," cramming their grave words into your ears against the stomach of your sense,—fastening upon some book or picture, or stall in a fair, or something that chance throws in their way, in order to show up, not its absurdity, which may be as great as they think, but what they conceive to be the condition of the people amongst whom they found it. Well, would intercourse with such experts, think you, prove wholly agreeable or conducive to intellectual serenity in the long run even to those who only regard them as humourists and lively writers? Unless in life they show themselves to be different men, we may be induced to think the reverse, and that for many reasons. To name at present but one; you can observe that, great despisers of mankind, they generally treat in the same way even the humanity which they profess to esteem, always viewing it on the ridiculous side, catching at the loosest laughters, evincing as

much contempt for the human race as they entertain for th supernatural virtues, and that is saying a great deal, being such sensible and nimble lungs that they always can laugh a nothing; always trifling, sneering, suspecting, mocking, ex posing faults, and never touching a grave chord that leaves yo with either admiration or reverence for men. In life they ma be different, but their own pens would lead one to think on had often met them; for besides that, in general, as Vau venargues complained, "the malady of our times is the wish t turn every thing into a jest, and hardly to endure any oth style," who does not know the particular generation which produced by means of this suspicious and satirical turn of mind the sort of faces that belong to it in a general way, with the red sparkling eyes which show the heart's malice? the rubicun knowing ones that talk in this manner leering over their win looking for what they call the bee's wing in it, and that see to write in this way after they have drank it? At least, he you content. I know them, yea, and what they weigh, even the utmost scruple. Each of them, like the rat in the fable,

> "Plein d'embonpoint, gros, et des mieux nourris,
> Et qui ne connoissoit l'Avent ni le Carême."

Depend upon it, as our own old poet says,

> "When rank Thersites opes his mastiff jaws,
> We shall hear music, wit, and oracle."

Independent of whatever you might be disposed to think their religious views, which it may puzzle themselves to mak out as to what they are, but solely with a view to your ow enjoyment during a thoughtful hour or two, one would not l in the least surprised to find that you, who in this kind merry fooling are nothing to them, turned sometimes from suc people as even from the remembrance of their works, pleasa as they often are, with an infinite nausea, just as if somethin had suddenly manifested itself to you in your own nature tha you had never before dreamt was in it. These men professedl despise, while giving proof that they hate, what Christian an tiquity revered. And are you not disposed sometimes to fe a kind of pleasure at the fact? Of course we are not co

fronted on the river with any extreme cases; but still, is it not natural to experience, after hearing them, somewhat of that relief which an honest man feels when assisting at the horrors of the French Revolution, and at last hears of the decree of the Commune of Paris giving the first example, which you have been so ardently longing for, of the formal abjuration of the ancient faith? On hearing that edict you seem to have a weight removed from your heart, and you breathe more freely. The truth is, to cite the remark of a great critic, there are but two schools in all things, as in history,—the school of respect, and that of irreverence or contempt*; and it is an agony for the generous when they see the latter imposing on its pupils the costume of the former. None of us need hear again all that you are ready to utter against the first school; but though such an assertion may appear at first a little harsh and even unreasonable, the fact is, it is that very school, so bespattered by your "utterances," which has the privilege of turning out, even in a gay, sprightly form, eligible subjects for the enjoyment of serene hours.

Then again, a grave literary company, in which the amusement would appear to consist in having licence to dispute—as in a school of Greeks, after their manner—first principles, as if nothing had ever been settled for us, as if there was no such thing in the world as a catechism on which we could rely for the true solution of matters that relate to the soul and the conduct of life, as if we were all in Pilate's condition when he asked so tauntingly "What is truth?" the licence to treat with indifference the outrage of a great belief upheld from all Christian antiquity by genius and learning, and still disseminated over the whole surface of the globe, and leave from wisdom to contradict the majority of the Christian world on points that come as home to every one as our duty for example to departed friends, appealing to what, with Locke's permission, I would call an innate idea, to an integral part of the constitution of human nature, and to a universal tradition of the human race†,—such a com-

* Pontmartin, Causeries du Samedi.

† De l'Usage de la Prière pour les Morts parmi les Payens.—Hist. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. ii. p. 119.

pany, fed apparently, at least for the moment, with what might be called as wicked dew as ever Caliban's mother brushed with raven's feather from unwholesome fen,—would tire minds in natural state more than solitude, in which those of a health nature might at least make, as it were, an act of general acquiescence, and then, turning to other subjects, laugh by aid of memory gladdening themselves with their own thoughts. We should be tempted, on such an occasion, to say with Electra "Come, how is it honourable or conducive to serenity to be careless of the dead?" Such rigidity is unknown to barbarians. But is it a mark of civilization to assume it in defiance of the feelings of our inmost nature? Are we to call enlightened those who harden themselves so? "With whom of mankind originated this? May I never be had in honour among such men!" We need ask no more about them. They acquiesce in abolishing prayer for the dead, the yearly commemoration of the dead. O fie! that is quite enough to settle the question respecting their eligibility.

It is the remark of Sir William Temple, that "the different opinions on religion in England, the factions they have raised or animated, have had an ill effect generally upon our manners and customs, inducing more avarice, ambition, and disguise with the usual consequences of them, than were before in our constitution; there being nowhere more knavery under the shows and pretences of devotion, and nowhere so many disputes upon religion; and for the rest," he adds, "I cannot but observe, to the honour of our country, that the good qualities amongst us seem to be natural, and the ill ones more accidental and such as would be easily changed*." Clearly, then, this statesman would rather have been inclined to approve of the method that we are now proposing, which involves nothing that is not as old as Alfred.

It would be rather out of place here to dwell on any of the particular objections which are alleged by this class of independent prophets, but as constituting discordant elements, and dissolvents to turn beautiful, clear, and serene things, into shapeless confusion, a few of them might be noticed. Cer-

* Miscel. p. 11.

ainly then it strikes us, without being Hebrew scholars (and if ou but give occasion for citing Hebrew, they fall into such earned discourse about demonology that it is enough to make ne feel quite frightened); I say it must strike us, without aving made any preparation by Semitic studies, that to love nd venerate, as the first Christians are admitted to have done, hose who, whether male or female, were known to have loved nd venerated the world's Saviour; and having been told by he Apostle to pray for one another, to ask such Christians, whether here or in the next world, to pray for us,—it must, I ay, strike ordinary apprehensions as if this can hardly be just he same thing as "to worship devils and the worst of God's reatures," though these great Hebraists tell us that it is just he same thing. Then again, to entertain such an idea of the reat and good God as to suppose that by prayers of this kind, which these objectors acknowledge were offered as early as the second century, though we know the custom to be coeval with Christianity — men "provoke his jealousy to the uttermost;" that they "are grieving his loving heart," and "stealing his love from the human heart to substitute in it a love for inferior gods"— to cherish such notions as these, seems to argue a turn of mind as contrary to common sense, and to just and sound ideas of our Creator, as it assuredly is to the interests of a serene hour, which are seriously damaged if you suppose that the first Christians were impious. We are taught by our Lord Himself in the Paternoster to believe that there is a certain likeness, though of course that is not the word for it, between the goodness of God and the virtue which we ourselves should practise, and that what we should dislike in others He would dislike in them. Pray then, if one may venture without irreverence to say it, what should we think of a man who was provoked at those who loved others, living or departed, solely because they had been his own friends? Suppose a great duke, living in his magnificent unrivalled mansion in the country, who on hearing that certain friends of his own, men of themselves poor and unable to assist any one, had been received with great honours by some well-meaning people greatly attached to himself, who wished in the capital to show him respect, entertaining these strangers, and honouring them for

the sole reason that they were known to be devoted to him, a resolved to spend their lives in serving and honouring him, suppose, I say, we should hear that this great prince was consequence provoked to exceeding wrath against those perso who had testified their respect and affection for himself in t way,—that he was moved to jealousy, and profoundly griev by their conduct. No one would believe it possible that such report had any foundation in truth; and whoever related su things of so good a prince would be deemed a calumniator a an enemy. Then again, as for the danger apprehended, must acknowledge that every thing, even prayer address directly to God, can be abused and perverted from its objec but I would ask whether, on conversing with a Catholic popu tion, with either peasants or artisans, or any pious creature aged women, or poor people frequenting religious services, with any class most accustomed to the language and devotio of the Church, you have ever heard them substitute in an exc sive or derogative way for "thank God," "glory be to God "the Lord protect you," "God speed you," and the like, any the formulas which, according to your interpretation of the principles, would be the first to occur to them? In point fact, have you ever found them substituting creatures for th Supreme Being? We never have; and London lads, who rega themselves at stalls with oranges and apples, are tolerably co versant with the kind of poor people who believe in the doctri that your critics deem so damnable. But further, and to hint another of their conceptions, is it very easy to fall in imm diately with their views and protests with respect to those wh acquiesce in the words of the Angel of the Annunciation, an believe that to her who bore God was granted the immaculat sanctification which Scripture ascribed to the Precursor, whose essential humanity, notwithstanding no one in conse quence, as far as I know, ever doubted, or called on others t doubt?

But in general, without going into any details, on such ex cursions as ours, which tend to develope so exquisite a tact for ascertaining what is and what is not a serene element, it seems as clear as any thing can be, that the interest of the hour re quires us to avoid those exemplary men whose passion would

draw ears to the most sequestered nook, whose affirmations or denials seem to cost them the least, who worship their own conceptions while delivering their own souls, as they say, by discharging an office for which they have no visible authority, who even in our boat would be for pulling violent papers, such as are called "antidotes," out of their pockets, and thereupon raising an unadvised strife of tongues, without ever blushing for the nonsense they pour forth, or for their stirring up, as far as in them and in their presents lies, mischief which perhaps they can never undo. Why, how dost thou, man? What is the matter with thee? Alas! God comfort him!—but "Il est plus aisé," Madame de Maintenon said, "de desarmer des soldats que d'accorder des docteurs." How many elements of serenity are wanting in some doctors with all their projects of reform! Truly to hear them one is often tempted to repeat Armado's moral with Moth's envoy,—

> "The fox, the ape, and the bumble bee,
> Were still at odds, being but three,
> Until the goose came out of door,
> Staying the odds by adding four."

—A good envoy ending in goose.

The disposition to deny, to contradict, to separate, to destroy, and knock over brutally and irrationally,—call it analysis, reformation, philosophy, or what you like,—is not favourable to the enjoyment of serene hours, even though you do not qualify it, in the words of a celebrated historian, as "odious rather than ridiculous;" at the best it should be received as a dog at a game of ninepins. It's better elsewhere. Let it be hooted off good-humouredly. Besides, as Madame Swetchine remarked, writing to Prince Gargarin, there is really a certain maniacal character belonging to those who, however amiable by nature, have caught the fever of contradiction *. We should rather then run away from them on every occasion as we should fly from mad dogs.

"Some controverters in divinity," says Ben Jonson, "are like swaggerers in a tavern, that catch that which stands next

* Lettres, ii. 336.

them, the candlestick or pots,—turn every thing into a weapon; ofttimes they fight blindfold, and do beat the air. Their arguments are as fluxive as liquor spilt upon a table, which with your finger you may turn into what channels you will. Such discussions are odious; these fencers in religion I like not." Then again, what can you make of

> "A man whose chief devotion lies
> In odd, perverse antipathies;
> In falling out with that or this,
> And finding somewhat still amiss?"

We might ask them 'in limine' from whom they have this great commission? Alack! they do usurp authority. But waiving this, which might so well be urged, where is their sagacity? "I implore you," writes St. Francis de Sales with amusing simplicity, if we suppose that it was a man of this kind he was addressing, "I implore you to wish to read the Scriptures and the ancient fathers with a mind freed from all preoccupation; and you will see that the principal and essential parts of the face of the ancient Church are entirely preserved in that which is now*." He might implore long enough; for that is precisely what many will not wish to do; and yet how disagreeable even must it be, one would think, to wish the contrary! "Good wits will be jangling, but gentles agree." Yes, nimble-chaps, what say you to that?

> "Concord is the soul of being,
> Nothing's better than agreeing."

Of course, I do not mean to say that we want insipid, nauseous agreement on every possible subject, which would put an end at once to any attempt at keeping up a lively, amusing conversation. St. Beuve tells us, that when the general Haxo, who liked a little friendly disputing, found no one to carry it on with him, he used to say to his companions, "We are all agreed, are we? Well, then, I'm off." It would be so with us. We should have to look out for something more savoury, as Saint Simon would say. But there is a great difference between

* Lett. 815.

a want of this kind and the craving that afflicts some people to find a subject for contradiction in whatever is most sacred and inviolable in the judgment of the majority of Christians. Within that sphere at least, good wits, if they can't find men to agree, at least will not continue with them a useless war of words; and it is with this limitation we would hold to the poet's opinion,—

> "Where company is met and well agreed,
> Good pastime doth right well indeed;
> But who can sit in daliance,
> Men sit in suche a variance?"

As for the mere spirit of contradiction, good wits, like fishermen, as in Izaak Walton's song, "must not wrangle," even on any matter. They will hold with Balzac, that the peace, though disadvantageous, which brings repose, is better than the victory which does not finish the war. "We have seen," says that great man, "I know not how many wars spring from a victory; and in this case, if the truth were known, we have to do with men, enemies of conclusion, foes to all ends of controversy, and with whom one can never finish. It would be a less miracle to make the dumb speak than to silence them."

> "Now voices over voices rise,
> While each to be the loudest vies;
> They contradict, affirm, dispute,
> No single tongue one moment mute;
> All mad to speak, and none to hearken,
> They set the very lap-dog barking."

When Diafoirus introduces his son as the intended lover of Angélique, he says of him, "No one makes more noise than he does in all the disputes of our school. No act passes without his arguing most violently in favour of the contrary proposition. He is firm in dispute, strong as a Turk in his principles, never gives up his opinion, and—though perhaps omitting a step which would turn the tables against him—pursues a chain of reasoning down to the very last link of logic." Nice sort of fellow, that! jolly for the party seeking a serene hour! Were such a panegyric pronounced on presenting us with a proposed

companion for a holiday, I think we should all be of the same opinion as the young lady and her faithful Toinette. This gentleman will out-talk us all. And it is not alone the son of Sirach who will say, "He that useth many words shall be abhorred; and he that taketh to himself authority therein shall be hated;" for we, too, think this, and conclude from it that he would not suit either for a life's voyage or only for one to last but half a quarter of a day. Madame de Maintenon describes another chip of the same block. "There is a young gentleman," she says, "a relation of mine, who is a Huguenot. He is only fourteen, and does not seem to me a very profound doctor; but he is all the more obstinate for that." This sort of talent is not exactly the thing for people like us, who, as Réné d'Anjou said of himself, "detest, with a hatred of death, all debates, discords, quarrels, dissensions; and believe that peace is at all times acceptable to God,—while, on the contrary, discord is contrary to Him." However, it is for others to go on to show that such a facility must be unlearned, as the old Greek poet says, even "if he is to be saved, and not merely to practise loquacity *." We have only to look on the temporal side of the matter; and "evidently conversation," at least such as befits our purpose, "is not," as Fontanes used to say, "an attack. It is like taking a walk, to the right and to the left, and winding in every direction." To be sure, there are some people in this respect with a strange turn of mind. The Barbon, for instance, far outdoes the general Haxo, for he begins to suspect and cry out if you even give in for a moment to his follies. "By the immortal gods!" he cries, "I am tired of speaking to myself. Deny something, in order that we may be two; defend yourself, in order that I may conquer and triumph." Yet if you have the least air of complying with his challenge, he is not satisfied. He is like the rough, surly one, in a party of youths, who, when he hears one of them say interrogatively, with a meek, gentle voice, "To-day's the 14th?" replies, "Who says it is not? Do you want to argue, you young dog?" He is like the philosopher to whom nature was said to have given, instead of two ears, three tongues; he is related to our Lady Plyant, who ex-

* The Clouds.

claims, "Hear you? No; I'll deny you first and hear you afterwards." If disposed to tell truth with regard to what you have said, he might, like Costard, "confess much of the hearing it, but little of the marking it;" or, like Richard himself, he might reply to your entreaties, "Speak, then, but I'll not hear." Respectable persons of this kind, whose brains are in their throat, have, in consequence of an aptitude to listen exclusively to one side, and that to the negative and noisiest side, an admirable facility for being gulled by orators, and pamphleteers, and leading articles, and letters to the editor, and public meetings, and all that; re-echoing, with the best conscience in the world, the voice perhaps of a victorious faction for that of a people by bayonets reduced to silence, and employing the pass-word of a secret society for an expression of the conscience and sentiment of mankind. It is the remark of an Italian, that "there is no demonstrated truth which may not be rendered, at least, very problematical by long, uniform, positive contradiction; nor any demonstrated lie, which may not be rendered probable to many and certain to some, by long, uniform, and positive affirmation." Now, to deny thus and to affirm thus is the wit of the genius which reigns in the society of these gentlemen; whereas, those whom they contradict are not much given to either denials or assertions of a wanton kind. They feel at rest; while those

> "Who setting councils, pope, and Church aside,
> Are every man his own presuming guide,"

can find ease only by a violent expression of their opinions. In a general way they are of the opinion of Cortadillo, with Cervantes, that there are not more letters in "no" than in "ay;" and then the use of the former seems somehow to give them an air of superior discernment and importance; though, in truth, as the Greek poet says, "cleverness is not wisdom, nor is the thinking on things unfit for mortals any better." A man cannot be much of a thinker, or he must be of very moderate abilities himself, to imagine that, in a general way, there is nothing beyond the thoughts of such proficients in theological criticism; for, on the contrary, there is in the judgment of common sense nothing more incomplete than those thoughts. As Rivarol said of the Dictionnaire Philosophique, "many of

them are vain, superficial, scornful, dissolving, essentially suited for the purpose of destruction, and that is all." However, they are pleased to view matters in another light, and so, if we once admit them, we must be armed for some unhappy words, or submit with a good grace, I suppose, and be swayed by their admirers, saying like Célimène,

> "Et ne faut-il pas bien que monsieur contredise?
> A la commune voix veut-on qu'il se réduise,
> Et qu'il ne fasse pas éclater en tous lieux
> L'esprit contrariant qu'il a reçu des cieux?"

And then too only think of being confronted amidst all this noise with such a logical incapacity! People can be in the wrong, and yet continue to reason with you all the same. It seems even, as Lacordaire says, that nothing is easier, so common are the examples to prove it. What say you, then, to a religion of contradiction, in which there is not even reasoning? Besides, there is the involuntary horror and disgust of the whole thing when it is a question of seeking peace of soul, and the supernatural sweetness of charity and a good will, for questionless that kind of temper is beyond what nature alone can yield. No, no; whether grave or facetious, such intelligent persons are equally ineligible. Johnson speaks of Milton's "controversial merriment as disgusting." I must be round with them to whichever of the sides they incline. Perdila's reply is all that each of them shall hear from us, "Wilt please you, sir, be gone!"

Though even when they are gone you are not quite delivered; for skilful persons of this type will act

> "Like the empyric, who dares boast
> Himself a Paracelsian, and daub
> Each post with painted follies."

Ten to one but they will be scattering their papers among the bulrushes, as they present them to the foreign ships in Ramsgate harbour, hoping to act upon some passing crew, and set them all a-doubting; for though memories and associations constitute one of the charms of religion which move most people, it is not, as we have just heard, every one who is wholly insensible

to the force of confident assertion, backed by a misrepresentation of facts, translated into every language under heaven, and printed with the approbation of a self-constituted court of final appeal. Of course, we try to be general in our remarks, but in truth, the least allusion to such men, who are in this way very enlightened, acts like a disturbing force upon the calm that we invoke. Fie! Let's speak no more of them, but only repeat, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon. It is an antidote, you know, as our old dramatist says,

> "Against the poison anger; 'twas prescrib'd
> A Roman emperor, who on every injury
> Repeated the Greek alphabet; that being done,
> His anger was over. This good rule
> Learn we now from him to practise."

We must be permitted, however, to philosophize a little longer upon these data, which are of far more importance than we might at first imagine; for surely, whether viewed only in relation to our immediate object, or to the great vital interests of mankind, which are not to be thrown overboard even when we are in a Thames wherry, such dispositions ought to be considered self-excluded. As for the sophists, for whom these innocents act as pioneers, who are on the search for contradictions in the minds of others, and who form difficulties of their own to oppose to their faith, as some people amuse children by tricks on cards which confound their judgment without magic, they are set down by Vauvenargues as the mountebanks of morality. The pioneers, however, are more likely to confront us on the occasions we are supposing; but lovers of the serene must make a resolute stand against them. People need not be brow-beaten by their professions; for, as Balzac says, "it is not running after reasons to seek truth by doubts and disputes. What is it then? It is to dirty, to gnaw, and to spoil beautiful things. It is to do what rats do in the house, and caterpillars in the garden. This trade is not an honest occupation, not an innocent exercise, not even a discreet vice, which conceals itself at home. It is an open profession of bad humour, a proud and presumptuous malevolence, seeking glory and applause. It is something worse and more cruel than we can express by words. It is like a ferocious

beast that has escaped from its cage and broken its chain, and that runs along the street flying at the faces of the passengers." What did Dr. Riccabocca do when he met it, even under a subdued form, in the person of Parson Dale? He jumped out of the window; and truly the best thing was it he could do. We should follow suit, saying with Titania,

> "——————— Fairies away,
> We shall chide downright if I longer stay."

A fine part have disputes of this kind played in the world, with no other effects, begging our controversialists' pardon, but to bewilder and disturb the serenity of many minds, while sending others to such deserts as we escape to in order to avoid them. There was a period, during the Arian influence, when all serene hours seemed banished from the Christian world to find a refuge on another river, the Nile, or in the retreats of mountain solitude. Who knows but that in the sixteenth century, during a movement more violent, though in a few respects of a different character, the islands and rushes of the Thames may have enjoyed somewhat of a similar exemption? Who knows but that voices may have been heard issuing from the banks of Sion House, or by the meadows of Chertsey, to utter words like those of St. Ephraim, "Happy the man who has fixed his regards on the clear mirror of truth, to see in it the mysteries which surpass all words! Happy the man who has around him the wall of silence which the controversies of doctors cannot scale! Happy the man who, weary of the disputes upon earth, has taken wing and fled up to a serener region! Happy the navigator of faith, who from the storms of disputation has landed in the haven of silence! Happy the man who has felt that the language of the lips is incapable of expressing the deep things of God! who loses not himself in search of the incomprehensible, but who sings before thee, O Lord, as a harp of which the sound gives peace to those who hear it! Happy the man who is dumb when it is a question of disputing about thy generation, but whose voice is like a trumpet to adore it! Happy the man who knows how difficult it is to know Thee, and how sweet to give Thee praise! Happy the man who has not tasted the wisdom of the Greeks, nor lost the savour of the apostolic

simplicity!" Thus might many still speak, even amidst our humble scenes, and in presence of some contemporaries of whom the world never hears, without forfeiting their claim to any quality that is estimable to wise men, though the most amorous of intellectual freedom. But, of course, it is not with the Oriental subtilties that there is danger just now of our being assailed on the Thames. It is to what seems to us gross delusions under a fair and legal form, while in some respects suited to the lowest family of minds, though at the same time to the proudest and vainest, that some—and that too perhaps with the best intentions—will seek to turn us. It is a very remarkable page in the conferences of Lacordaire, where he traces the doubts, and negations, and affirmations that are used against the House of Peace to those that were employed in Paradise to tempt our first parents. "Quære?" Why? This interrogation was a power and a crime. Certainly when it relates to the condition of those simply and catholically believing and living in the world now, there is reason to shun those who play the part that was defined by the English officer, when interrogated by Pope, as being that of a little crooked thing that asks questions. The spirit of evil began thus with calling in question what existed, and so it is here,—why this and that, while each query engenders doubt, and mistrust, and discord. Then follows the second stage, which consists in a proud and resolute denial. "Nequaquam." Not at all. The negation follows the interrogation, and this makes division. In fine, there is the power of affirmation enlisted in the same cause. "When your eyes are opened, you will be as God, knowing good and evil"—in the last, as in the first proceeding, troubling and destroying all serenity and all peace.

"Noble Timon, what friendship may I do thee?" "None but to maintain my opinion." And what is that, pray? Perge, so it shall please you to abrogate scurrility. Oh, it is only to believe, with the English book of Homilies put forth by authority, that all the Christian world was drowned in damnable idolatry for fifteen hundred years and more. Good gracious me! Only think of what this involves. Well, I never! There are however, thank God, some little difficulties about this view. To make for such a resting-point of sweet repose, history and

mediæval learning constitute rather awkward ground to go over; therefore methinks one might exclaim on receiving th invitation,—

> "Blessed credulity, thou great god of error,
> That art the sure foundation of huge wrongs,
> To thee gives he his vows and sacrifice!
> By thy great deity he doth believe
> Falsehoods, that falsehood's self could not invent,
> And from that mischief doth draw a course
> To overwhelm even virtue, truth, and sanctity."

Certainly without losing our temper, which contingency is itse a very unserene proceeding, we may be permitted to say that is not very pleasant, or indeed easy, for a thoughtful youth, i his first enthusiasm for the true, the beautiful, and the goo to accept the part of a renegade. "Have you ever reflected asks Lacordaire, "as to what the word 'renegade' means You think perhaps that it is a man who changes his religion Why Catholics do nothing else but invite men of other religion to embrace their own? and assuredly no one accuses them making renegades. What is it, then? It is a man who passe from a religion which has foundations in the intelligence, i the heart, and in the history of humanity, to a religion negations, void and incapable of operating a conviction base on those foundations. It is the man who abandons ground which discussion is possible between reasonable beings, to ent a region in which error is unmasked, or to pass from a light o secured, if you will, here and there, to darkness more than certa and unintermittant." This is not easy for a sound intelligen and a great heart; nor is it unembarrassing for any one posses ing only a very moderate degree of sense to have to make su sacrifices of historical, poetical, and logical truth as an act friendship of this kind would involve; to have to espouse th which in a general way may be said to have on its side, as L cordaire remarks, neither reason, nor the heart, nor history, n order, nor logic. He will be more inclined, to use Antonio words, "What impossible matter will he make easy next?" to say bluntly with the Père Boutauld, that he has always hea that "novelty and innovation in such matters form a road whi

leads to the most ancient of all sins, which is apostasy*." He will be more ready to affirm that resistance to constituted authority in any order is not in itself a virtue; that opposition and contradiction are not necessarily good symptoms in any way. He will be more inclined to cite the words, "Quasi peccatum ariolandi est, repugnare; et quasi scelus idolatriæ nolle acquiescere," leaving them, after administering that cordial, to chew their homily about idols with what gusto they may.

But there is no use of reciting texts or of referring them—leaving out logicians and poets—to the old or to the new historical school, led by Stolberg, Voigt, Hurter, Goerres, and a hundred others, not excluding merely archæological societies, British and foreign. Tilly-vally! master. All's one for that. Their speech is passion. The "Turk Gregory" of our witty knight, with a sly adhesion to the legend of Pope Joan, sinks the scale against such historical discoveries. To use the simile of my friend Janin on another subject, "many followers of the enlightened school are made like certain little birds, which allow themselves always to be caught in the same nets in which the fowler has already taken thousands of their kind." "Wonderful thing to think on," said an old sparrow-catcher to myself one day that I met returning to London with his bag full of birds; "wonderful thing, sir, when you come to think of it! for more than thirty years I have worked these farms down the road, and I have lived by them, aye, and, though you may not believe it, grown rich too by catching them; bless you, I am well known to all the gentry of five counties, and yet there's as many sparrows now as the first day when I began!" So it is with this fine-feathered but gullible bipeds in the human form; they are as many as ever, and at the mercy of the fowler still, who has so limed bushes as to betray their wings, that fly how they can they'll be entangled. So now, poor things, to all your learned, friendly, and common-sense expostulations, they will turn a deaf or a contemptuous ear. It helps not; it prevails not: talk no more. They answer with Antonio,—

> "Muse not that I thus suddenly proceed,
> For what I will, I will, and there an end."

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* Les Conseils de la Sagesse, 57.

They are in their old lunes again, only they are now so obstinate to cry out error, that any madness I ever yet beheld seemed bu tameness, civility, and patience, to this their distemper they ar in now. Yet a few of their company act like Anacharsis, wh being told, by some one half muddled like himself, that he ha married an ugly woman, replied, "Indeed I think so too; bu however, now give me, O boy! a cup of stronger wine, that may make her out beautiful*;" though the majority, censurin such misgivings, will prove her fair or talk till Doomsday. I either case, while in this psycological state, notwithstandin their boast of independence, they are the liegemen of whatev is "established," though it contain nothing but what lives wi "the disagreeable vitality of things which are organized in d organization." Painters try to introduce order in confusio but these artists seem content with confusion pure, or rath worse confounded. As for contradictory assertions, few can be them at that game. They would have called Cæsar "drunkard an hour after saying of him that a sober man was come to t ruin of the republic. They word out truths, but there is consonancy in the sequel. That suffers under probation. Is good then to sooth them in these contraries? Or safe to contra a habit of reckless inconsistency, as when they speak of Hi "who took our very flesh, and was made of a woman," and th sneer at those Christians in name who now pronounce Mary "be mother of God?" They are like Sir Toby's challenger, read at a moment to call us So-and-so, and say, "Wonder not, no admire not in thy mind, why I do call thee so, for I will sho thee no reason for it." They might add with Morose, "all dis courses but my own afflict me. They seem harsh, impertinent and irksome." And no doubt they speak truth in this, for the are over-proud and, in arguing a point, under-honest, in self assumption greater than in the note of judgment. This menta disposition, dealing in portentous paradoxes, reckless of thei logical consequences, nursed by principle, blowing them full o maggot ostentation, and let loose upon the most sacred ground whatever it may effect respecting the interests of another world which is a question on which our excursionists have not to ente

* Athen. x.

in a direct way, at all events rather spoils men for the present, involving them in a new kind of warfare, for which they seem never to have been intended by either nature or grace. After laughing with you perhaps the minute before, like the best of fellows, like the most affable creature, so merry! so pleasant! mounting you up like quick-silver, and circulating like oil, at a word spoken, in reference to truth of this order, how cold, how grovelling, how repulsive, and how haughty they become of a sudden with all their intelligence! Their whole humanity seems to leave them in an instant. They seem to become pure spirits with only pride to live on. Yet it is a pitiful sight, too; for only look at them, "stalking up and down like a peacock, a stride and a stand; ruminating like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning, biting their lips with a politic regard, as who should say—there were wit in this head, an 'twould out." They correspond not with the race of mortals. And what is at the bottom of it all? Self-confidence, self-esteem. As St. Augustine remarks, "it is a phantom of their imagination, and their error is their God,—'et error meus erat Deus meus.'" For affection, mistress of passion, sways it to the mood of what it likes or loathes, and hence the sad truth, as an old writer remarks, "that the man who is once engaged in any sect, is almost sure to be in the wrong; his study is to support the interest he has espoused, whereby his passions are inflamed, his mind soured, and himself divested of every amiable quality; and at the same time, while making the greatest pretences to religion, and naming himself a subject of the Prince of Peace, he acts under the Prince of Strife and Discord." "It is certain," as Balzac says, "that having begun to love something for its own sake, time adds our own interest to the merit of the thing, whatever it may be. We wish men to believe that all our choices have been good; and this makes obligation what was before voluntary. So, even when our affection ceases, we think ourselves under the necessity of defending our judgment." Then follow results that are both ludicrous and tragical, resembling the feat of him who was represented of old on the stage of Greece as saddling a beetle and riding up to heaven on it, the chief difference being that his project was to bring down peace for his country, whereas their purpose is to make on earth

strife and hatred everlasting. The sort of food, too, that they have to mix up for their Pegasus, as the slave says of what he fed the beetle with, is enough to turn one's stomach when you think of it; for what more nasty dish than egotism, however cooked and disguised? Yet this is what they of the separation have to serve up; for Isaac was not so dear to Abraham as their own opinions, as being their own, are dear to lunatics of this kind, though it may require but a slight tincture of letters and philosophy to observe that, intellectually viewed, they place themselves by reason of them in an untenable position, which is never an agreeable one. Armed with detached sentences of Holy Writ these Oliver Mar-texts, who in no hour are well met, dispense with every thing but the very letters which they seem to hold tight as dropped to them from the sky, and with which they will despatch us here at once under the first tree. They announce, proclaim, or rather to all ordinary apprehension, they have made up their minds doggedly to think, forsooth, so and so: we need not specify particulars; they think that Europe was in the darkness of idolatry till their Reformation; they think that to call a thing a Romish element is to settle with it, both in the East and the West; that they are all in the right, and that we others are only deluded by legendary tales. Is it but thought so? What are they that think it? Surely one may well smile to hear them speaking against delusions, and sneering at us for yielding to them. What have many of those done all their lives but take legends for realities, fogs for *terra firma*, clouds for shores? As Fauriel said of some one, "naturally eloquent and ignorant," they are at the mercy of their own potent imagination. No doubt, as Lessing said to the young pedant who showed him his manuscript, there is in the work of these men both what is new and what is true, only, the new is not true and the true is not new. Every one that knows what, as attested by history, all kinds of monuments, and even language itself, was believed in common by all Christian people, even in the first ages, after they were divided by schisms which left it untouched, —must see enough to feel pretty sure that what they think is a novelty, and that unless all the old Christians, both of the West and of the East, erred, they are not sufficiently well informed about things of the other world. Tush, tush, man, never fleer

and jest at us; we speak not like a dotard nor a fool. Indeed, as Malebranche said, "to maintain that all the Christian Churches of antiquity should have adopted doctrines which certainly, on first hearing of them, cause the imagination to revolt, which ever shock the senses, astonish reason—and to believe that they did all that insensibly, without any one perceiving it or crying out against it, is to renounce common sense, and betray a total ignorance of man, and an utter absence of reflection on his interior dispositions*." Intellectual pride being added to egotism, and striking out new sparkles of his own, the ancient line may be applicable to them,

"Id quod scis, prodest nihil; id, quod nescis, obest."

Were my lord void of what he knows his ignorance were wise, where now his knowledge must prove ignorance. Then, as Malebranche again remarks, "the desire of being distinguished causes them to call in question what all the world believes, and to give out for unquestionable what commonly passes for being very uncertain. Self-love, with a little dose of vanity to boot, is not satisfied when one is not thought to be above others, and when one does not know what no one knows. So instead of building solidly on the foundations of faith, and of rising by humility to an intelligence of the sublime truths that they unfold, and so meriting before God and before equitable persons a true glory, they take a malicious pleasure and a kind of pride in undermining sacred foundations, and in rushing imprudently against that terrible rock which will crush those who have the insolence to strike premeditately upon it†." In short, and in plain English, what it is not for man to explain these enlightened Christians quarrel with. Now I would not have my right company of this mind. This is what struck Ariosto, to name but one deep observer, as a capital defect. He who in religion, like his friend Cardinal Bembo, would be the same as other people, while rather excusing the innovators, attributed their choice to the necessary consequences of mooting points too subtle for human apprehension. Supposing even that the schoolmen, while differing too among themselves on these very points,

* Entretiens sur la Métaphysique. † Ibid.

have gone too far in laying down distinctions, and that some of their terms, however sanctioned later, strike us as unnecessary, what is that to faith or to those who seek hours made serene by means of it? One might exclaim with poor King Henry,

> "Good Lord! what madness rules in brain-sick men;
> When, for so slight and frivolous a cause,
> Such factious emulations shall arise!"

So here, again, we see in a particular instance how the arrows shot off from the first day of our rambles, that we thought lost, are found again,—how qualifications, long since noticed as essential, bear directly upon our present subject; for had they possessed that humility in philosophy formerly insisted on, to say nothing of a hundred other things, that we spoke of as requisite, people would be dispensed now from the inconvenience and annoyance of having to get rid of them on this new ground. Would they had profited! then should we not now be tired with this ado. At all events, let their ability be what it may, and though no one should question the extent of their learning, we'll none of them; for their disposition leads from the threshold, by an inevitable force, to opinions fatal to serenity, which is all that we are now looking after. "For," as Balzac says, "what's the use of placing yourself in a self-constituted chair of authority? This is only leaving one idolatry for another. You might as well have remained in Paganism. This is renouncing the gods, and making, as we have just heard St. Augustine say, gods of your invention, and adoring your own sense and your own fancies. We lovers of serene hours would not for the world be harsh with any one individually, but others will call a spade a spade; and so Lord Bacon, speaking of the heathen system, says that with such dispositions men not only 'worship idols,' but that 'their whole religion is an idol in itself.' However, we shall be told that they are learned professors, and that they must have a philosophy. Well, in regard to moral subjects, philosophy," concludes Balzac, "and their opinions at the best cannot claim justly a higher title, should serve and obey the Church, not reign over it. Aristotle, Plato, and the rest of them, whether ancient or modern, are the captives and prisoners of Jesus Christ, who must receive the law from Him, and not give

it. They are not seated in the car of the victor; they follow, whether willing or unwilling, the chariot of his triumph; with all their airs, they are only of the waggon-train and of the baggage."

Moreover, by rights one has not even to answer such people. When they come forward armed with genius or sarcasms to call in question or deny what is—namely, the Church, its doctrines, or its discipline—to give us in exchange, forsooth, their own reason, which chooses to protest, and their own heart, which resolves to revolt, what is their protestation but an impotency; what is their revolt, but a ruin; what is a man who withdraws, but a leaf that falls? The Catholic Church exists. You demand proofs of its legitimacy? "It is for you," adds Lacordaire, "to prove that you are capable of comprehending it. It is for you to establish facts against it, to demonstrate that your intelligence has measured an horizon vaster than its own; that your thoughts have realized in the world more good than its thoughts, that your virtues are greater than what it produces; and that you weigh as much as the ages and the place which it occupies here below. If you cannot do this, it will keep silence, or at least it will have the right to be silent. When the Arab, passing at the foot of the Pyramids, casts a lance at them, they are silent."

But here comes this lunatic again on a different bent; and so another disposition that must be objected to, as constituting a disqualification in regard to what we are proposing, is the having like him a warm spirit in a chilling enterprise, or the inclination to foster hatred for what, when truly presented in a quiet way, is not deserving of it. What eye but such an eye would spy out such a quarrel?

> "Chacun tourne en réalités,
> Autant qu'il peut, ses propres songes;
> L'homme est de glace aux vérités,
> Il est de feu pour les mensonges."

Be that as it may, we don't like people who have the faculty of being angry without provocation, and who are naturally inclined to believe the worst, which, as a philosopher says, "I take to be a certain mark of a mean spirit and a wicked soul, while the

contrary quality is the fruit of a generous temper and an honest heart." We all, or at least a great number of us, know how certain races have been disliked, scorned, stigmatized, avoided, and bodily and sociably oppressed by the upholders of innovation in matters of religion, which these races resisted and still resist. We must refer to Cicero against Verres to find any parallel for the treatment which they experienced at the hand of certain magnats, imagining them to be a bye-word in Europe, because they had themselves been reckless, trampling on their religion for three hundred years, exhibiting whims and cruel misdeeds that are actually portentous, though often wholly unknown near the seat of empire. And yet when these injured men wildly retaliate by crimes which religion holds in horror, and which human laws can never pardon, these self-constituted prophets, assuming the airs of social science and of civil wisdom, proclaim that it is Catholicity which makes them murderers. "I have no hesitation," says one of them, "in affirming that all these evils are mainly, and above all other causes, to be traced to that form of worship to which the majority are madly devoted." Within hearing of such accusations it would not be easy, I think, for people of ordinary conceptions, though the meekest upon earth, to enjoy much interior serenity. But without taking into account such practical results, look only at the intellectual impediments and restraints to which they would condemn us all. Instead of allowing our minds to expatiate through the vast, warm, beautiful regions most clearly unfolded, amidst contrasts I admit of every kind, by Christian history and the present condition of the world,—instead of allowing us to acquiesce in "the most profound and durable sentiment that humanity has ever known, the catholic sentiment *," while teaching systematic contempt for what they are pleased to call "the Romish element," if they do not actually hope to carry this island in their pocket, they would at least compel us to confine ourselves to a small frozen circle. As Cicero might say, they lead us "ex ingenti quodam immensoque campo in exiguum sane gyrum," and into what a little arbitrary circle! It is curious to find that people predisposed to take views of this kind, existed so far back as in

* Montalembert.

the time of St. Chrysostom; for he complains of those who perambulate the world in order to return with the opinion that all things are confused, and that there is nothing right or just amongst men; while all the time, he adds, it is they who individually are confused in mind, taking offence at their own illusions, and stumbling against their faults which their own hands have placed across their path; though, like Jonas, they would rather see perish three hundred thousand citizens than have their opinion disproved or their sentence set aside.

But again, I would ask, who can be serene if within hearing of the unmusical ravings of hatred? And here a hostile song is sure to be preluded bordering at least on the *μισητέον*. That admirable writer De Quincey, in his zeal for the orthodox reputation of Dryden's "Panther," the fairest creature of the spotted kind, speaks of "Milner, the Papist of Winchester," and adds, "this ruffian, for such he really was *." We know with what sneers the pastors, whom God has promised never to forsake, are at present treated by literary men of this class; but in reference to these latter, on that one point at least, we might say with truth, "Voila les vrais braillards." For, come now, is it not a shameful thing, and a thing hostile to all truly serene hours, to hear the names of illustrious men, for whom all the learned Christians of Europe entertain the highest respect and regard, uttered with scorn and execration, as if they were so many impostors and criminals? and as if we were to be brought back to the old Pagan manners, as when Julian, with such good taste, applied to the great St. Athanasius the epithets *πανοῦργος*, *πολυπράγμων*, *ἀνθρωπίσκος*, &c.? It is but a poor remedy on such occasions to have to burst forth with indignation in the somewhat unpolite language of Heywood, saying in reply,

> "And now I have found one maistry
> That ye can do indifferently;
> And it is not philosophizing,
> But even only very lying;
> And all ye three can lie as well
> As can the falsest devil in hell."

Such retorts, it is needless to remark, are any thing but pleasant

* Whiggism in its Relation to Literature, p. 154.

to those even who make them, in a moment of foolish passion; for, as Walton says again of anglers, all we of the river, in a general way, love civility, "and dislike severe censures." "Mais laissons-là ces gens." It ought however to be considered a very serious matter this. For every one has an interest in their hate's proceedings. To excite one class of citizens against another, or to sow hatred between them, is in France an offence punishable by law. Here in England, where poor Jules Janin would sometimes be at his wits' end to discover among the reading public any vestige of the religion of good humour, of sympathy, or of respect, it is deemed by some, whose wit lies in their sinews, a manly line of conduct, and at all events not illegal, though in this amiable way you should wear your tongue to the root, rolling the savage eye of a Gorgon at us. Here there are societies, reviews, and daily journals that could not exist all the year round if they were not permitted to calumniate and disparage many millions of their fellow-creatures, filling others with a lodged hate and a certain loathing for them; for that is the upshot of their learned disquisitions, and of their artful criticism, albeit it used to be thought good policy in times past, even among ourselves, not to sow displeasure and disunion among the subjects of one crown. But that's an old instance, as Benedick says, "that lived in the time of good neighbours." Nevertheless, in every age and in every country such a habit argues a state of mind and feeling which disqualifies men for the kind of enjoyment that we wish to partake of. Such a state of things, when you think of the general social results, is enough to elicit exclamations, when you consider it only in relation to our particular object, Why this passes? This is mad as a mad dog! Such people are not fit to go loose any longer. They should be pinioned. Nay, do not fright us with an angry look. Hence, heap of wrath! Here is no place for you. This is sanctuary. We object, therefore, for purely private reasons of our own, to whatever creates needless diffidences, and opens new, or keeps open artificial sources of discord and malevolence in a Christian community. These "alliances," as forsooth they are called, are not wanted; their only result is to filch money out of the purses of well-meaning idiots, and to trouble the world with unreasonable animosities. I know, indeed, unfortunately,

that in England of late you may defend yourself, like Trygæus at the gates of heaven, saying, "at any rate the character of our speeches is that of our country;" but the apology will not counterbalance the gravity of the reply which in that old play is put in the mouth of Mercury, "On account of which, I know not if henceforth you will ever see peace*," or, as I would read it, internal serenity of mind, any more. In fact, as a philosopher remarks, where men set out in the search of truth under the conduct of "mistaken opinion or of error, they work up their heated imaginations often to such a delirium, that the more genius and the more learning they have, the madder they grow." Then indeed serene hours, and recreation, and sleep itself, are but meals sauced, and barred, and hindered by the clamour; but as the abbess says to Adriana,

> "In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest,
> To be disturbed, would madden man or beast."

"Our own brethren," says Balzac, alluding to the introducers of novel opinions in religion, "were our natural enemies; and there was more difference between two Frenchmen than between a Frenchman and a Muscovite." And remember too that it was not a difference merely inward; that it was drawn into action by battles and wars; in allusion to which Brantome said, "that if it were not for the Prince de Condé and his brave captains, and Monsieur the Admiral, that glorious warrior who planted this new gospel, and made it bud forth and verdant, that cause of difference called religion would be withered up and of the colour of dead leaves†." At one time it looks like a dark fanaticism directed against mankind in general, somewhat resembling the mental state of that "dangerous lunatic" who said that he would shoot any man he saw in his field, that it did not signify for what purpose he was there, for no man could be killed who was innocent, and that if he was not guilty of any offence at the time, he had committed an offence at some other time, for which he deserved to die; and this, he said, was true of persons who are executed for a crime that they did not commit. This man, no doubt, is tainted in his wits; alas! how fiery

* Peace. † Tom. v. 263.

and how sharp he looks! while at another time the disposition only belongs to the character of one well understood to be a "perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the capitol," who can "mingle with the English epicures," and catch the sort of fish he wants with the grossest bait and the coarsest hook; being ever in the liver vein, which makes flesh a deity; well, this is pure, pure idolatry, and to all sober apprehensions leading out of the way. Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer. However, he can't do much harm. But what can be made of others who, with all their wits about them, and with a gravity and an austerity that no one questions, know of no union of which something that savours a good deal of hatred, or at least of what looks very like contempt for the majority of Christians, is not the foundation? men so prophetically proud that they rave in saying nothing? There are some who might hear

"—— operum hoc, mihi crede, tuorum est."

Yet spite and scorn are scurvy bonds of fellowship. And, besides, if such people really seek truth, they would do well to reflect "how unfit," as an English statesman says, "is even the greatest genius to discern the spirit of others when he hath once overheated his own." Then, too, look at the inconsistency of the whole thing. After being invested and installed with great pomp of words as one of those professing the glorious privilege of what is called private judgment, some fine day you begin to use it, and to the horror of your officious counsellor, you cease, through a disinterested conviction, to protest against Christian antiquity. The result, in regard to your friend, can be described in Shakspeare's words, "You are now sailed into the north of his opinions, where you will hang like an icicle on a Dutchman's beard." In less figurative language, as Mowbray says to Hastings,

"Your valuation shall be such
That every slight and false-derived cause,
Yea, every idle, nice, and wanton reason,
Shall to them now taste of this action."

Enlightened persons so influenced may know what writing a

very clever, or as we say now "sensational," article is, if it be not question of a fair one,—may know within certain limits what philosophy of a human kind is, which is a still greater concession,—may know what learning within a certain sphere and of a certain condition is, which is highly probable, and we are glad when they are so quiet; for if they had been thoroughly moved, as some one says, "you should have heard them so loud and so melancholy!" But what religion in the old sense is, one cannot exactly see how with such dispositions, and however Stoical they may live, they can ever know. Consequently, for all these reasons, not excepting the last, as we shall suggest later, their thoughts and their presence are alike alien to the interests of a serene hour. "Their psychology," to speak with a proper regard for what they expect from every one, "is not applicable to our intellectual situation." Balzac might well deplore "that furious zeal which violates not only civil society and the rights of men, but also common humanity and the law of nature. These men," he says, "transported with such a passion, think that God has made in his own likeness only those who are of their private opinion. In vain you seek for a calm after tempests. They will have nothing to do with treaties; their mind is ever armed, and their tongue hostile. At the name of Rome,—great mysterious name, no doubt, Rome, as Athenæus says, meriting the appellation of the nation of the world, or an epitome of the whole earth *,—at that name, interpreted as it was, even in times of dissent, by innocent men like Izaak Walton, so worthy a representative of our river philosophy;—at that name, recalling 'limina apostolorum,' or," as he says, "the place dear to every 'devout Christian, where St. Peter and St. Paul lie buried together;' at that name," continues the great French observer of the generation around him, "I have seen them seized with a rage, not like the fury which inspired, but like that which rent and convulsed Orpheus." We may well believe him, since long afterwards, like the Persians under Sapor in the fourth century, they seemed even to see Rome in all places, and to think that every Christian in the East was a disguised Roman, because the centre of the Christian faith is at

* Athen. i.

Rome *. So they are now calling out "Romanist," a word unknown to history, to literature, to all theology, but their own; and, what I ask permission to add, unknown in polite society, which never can tolerate barbarisms, that contradict history, and literature, and theology, and the manners of well-bred and well-informed men. What concerns however others more in those latter days, we see each of them like Hannibal, seeking actually throughout the universe—going to the East, going to the West —to find an enemy to oppose Rome,—"hostem toto orbe quærebat." What a lack-brain is this! He means no goodness either by his looks. He is far gone, far gone! Here, and in what owes its unity to the Holy See, these lovers of contradiction have at last found the precise thing they want, the one thing necessary, a durable object, which can hold them together in troops exasperated,—a moon at which they can bark and howl. Why, as we sit here, hoping to secure our repose, even now we hear in the distance the echo of a hollow burst of bellowing like bulls, or rather tigers, and this too kept up by men who read the Bible, and writers that they often truly qualify as adamantine, who would not have much relished such demonstrations. But, nevertheless, to common reasonable persons, all "this is abominable," and, as Holofernes adds, "it insinuteth me of insanie." What! lost in the labyrinth of their fury, unable to buckle their distempered cause within their belt of rule, and then find fault with a centre of love and union! They might as soon quarrel with repose on the summer grass. Invoke authority, and then reject it if it happens to be legitimate; we think that very odd—in fact, to be one of these things that no man can understand, and so far we boast of no perspicuity of intellect, beyond that of Lord Dundreary. Truly, they seem sober ancient gentlemen by their habit, but their words show them madmen. One might address them in the language of an ancient convertite, and say,

> "Come, come, you froward and unable worms!
> My mind hath been as big as one of yours,

* Albert de Broglie, L'Église et l'Empire Romain au IV. Siècle, iii. 180.

My heart as great; my reason, haply, more,
To bandy word for word, and frown for frown;
But now, I see, our lances are but straws;
Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare—
That seeming to be most, which we least are.
Then rail your stomachs, for it is no boot."

But as these are generally too far gone to take advice, it is best to let them rail and pass on their way. "Let this man be gone," says Lichas in the Trachiniæ; "for to babble with a madman is not the part of the wise." One sees, too, at a glance that the hatred cherished by such a person, as part or the whole of religion, is condemned by an irreversible law to disappointment,

"Since, finally, with censure and disdain,
Vain shall his work be, and the toil be vain."

Rienzi the Tribune sought to restore the old Rome; but all wise men, if you will believe Villani, said from the first the enterprise is a fantastic work which cannot last long, "era un opera fantastica e da poco durare*." "Of course," as Petrarch himself said, "there may at any time be a temporary triumph to such barbarians combined to overthrow him who is revered on the banks of the Tibur; and our posterity may have to reverence on the banks of the Tagus him who has fled thither from their violence or their deceits. Time, in appearance, confounds all things. At the bottom it is the business of the fisherman who, knowing the Rhine, the Rhone, and the Tagus, chose the Tibur to fix his bark and his nets on; it is the business of the pilot whose vessel is assailed by the tempest, and who stands at the helm; we are only passengers, running indeed the same risk, but without being responsible†;" but be the tempest what it may, and let the tide carry us whither it will, in the very worst moments, to those who would direct us on a foreign shore, one might say with very calm and well-grounded assurance,

"——— Like wolves you undertake
A quarrel with the moon, and waste your anger;
Nay, all the shafts your wrath directeth hither
Are shot against a brazen arch, whose vault

* Vill. l. 12, c. 89. † Fam. lib. xi. 6.

Impenetrable sends the arrows back
To print just wounds on your own guilty heads."

I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban. If you have rage for indulging in that licence, and if you must need shoo pray then aim your darts, as one of the ancients said, agains your own party, amongst yourselves; for when you send the against things ordained by Heaven, and providentially standin before your face, I will not say that you commit sacrilege, bu simply that you lose your labour. "Proinde quærite aliqua mollem cedentemque materiam, in quam tela vestra figantur. While in that state of mind, it is not faith that will make sere these men of confidence; beguiled as they are, as when t snake, roll'd in a flowering bank with shining chequer'd slou doth sting a child, that, for the strangeness, thinks it excelle No, faith is not what they want then; it is doubt! Yes; as French writer says, "understand me well,—doubt;—that w be your best counsellor, your friend of greatest forethought- doubt." Doubt the accusations they advance before you; dou the promises they make you; doubt the anger with which th inspire you; doubt the scorn which they instil into you; dou the truth of the representations which they make of forei nations and of your own fellow-countrymen; doubt su teachers, however hoary-headed or clever with their pen, a doubt yourself too, for listening to them without repugnan and a sort of sorrowful amaze, which on such occasion wou become you best. And indeed, after all, it is not impossi that in moments of frankness one may hear from them in rep somewhat like the answer of the old astrologer to Petrarch, being rallied for his giving in to such follies; "Friend," he s with a sigh, "you are in the right; I think like you; but have a wife and children *." Well, where there is humanity, is not for us to remain long seated on the bench. They mista we believe, the interest of wife and children; they militate e against the pleasure, and joy, and serenity of those belo ones; but we are then voiceless; we must break up the co without a sentence, commending them to God and to his mense pity.

* Sen. lib. iii. Ep. 1.

Again, whatever tends, like the denial of intercourse between the two worlds, for instance, to animalize society in more than a sensuous way—by dissipating systematically in the secret recesses of each person's mind the spirit of dumb reverence, and of unfathomable respect for what is invested with an authority deemed divine by the consent of all Christian antiquity, not to speak of modern wisdom, the aggregate of what is allotted to humanity, which will be found to agree with it if you take such men as Leibnitz and Bossuet for its representatives, who have as good a right, I suppose, to stand for it as any journalist or university man at the present day—must prove decidedly hostile to the purpose that people have in view when seeking serene hours. Give us for companion a vulgar man swayed on this side and on that, between the yes and the no, and not caring to know whether it is no or yes; a man who holds to nothing, not even to his doubt, and the case is certainly bad enough as far as regards the poetry of such an excursion as ours; but it is worse still when we have to do with the systematic caviller, armed with a certain degree of learning and of refinement, when it is not philosophy, but a desire to screen himself that makes our philosopher; and when to say nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing, and to have nothing, is to be a great part of his title. Shakspeare, as Coleridge remarks, "never puts habitual scorn into the mouths of other than bad men, as in the instances of Antonio and Sebastian in the Tempest." It is the same with the most ancient muse. "That I may not then make a long speech," says Theonoe, "I will be silent as to many things, nor in folly will I ever be a fellow-counsellor with my brother, for I benefit him, though not seeming to do so, if from impiety I make him holy." But when man, descending from the heights of the soul, condemns himself to suffer the yoke of animality, he soon loses sight of the regions which are natural to him. The infinite appears to him no longer as any thing but an abstraction, as a void without reality, where visible and tangible things move, his science being centred in the knowledge of external phenomena; and if the mathematics continue dear to him, it is only on the material side where they touch bodies, and not on that by which they touch the real infinite, which is God. Justice fades away for him in the same proportion, and

goodness only survives, as in the lower creatures, under th form of instinct and sensation. Whatever then produces a effect of this kind, whether by direct or indirect means, whethe as in St. Augustine's time, under the name of liberal doctrines— "per doctrinas quas liberales vocant,"—or more remotely, as h says, "falso nomine religionis*," whether privately or in th way of a national temper, at a particular epoch, however pro tracted, whether exercised with a consciousness of its tendency or without that sense, through an attachment to selfish interest wrongly understood, is to be considered by all who seek a com mon object with the kind of people we are supposing, as bein a portentous evil,—"et longa animi provisione fugiendum. Some, of course, may little suspect the existence of such ev under the grave and intelligent forms that we are alluding t For what more grave and apparently intelligent than many the propositions with which one-sided men of talent seek to cr down ancient principles? Still less may some be prepared f assenting to those who tell them with what fearful rapidity ev of this kind extends and increases; for, in fact, this revolution ideas in a single head, or rather heart, proceeds after the manne of that in the state, of which we may form a judgment, b attending to the remark of Thiers, where he says, "minds ha been so rapidly borne along, that the laws of 1791 appeared absurd to the generation of 1792, as those of the thirteen century had appeared to the generation of 1789†." All th may seem incredible to those who, with a certain enthusiasm f one truth to the prejudice of another, favour and countenanc if they do not even openly, with the same good intentions, pr pagate evil of this subtle kind, seeking to undermine the fou dations of the Christian faith, and indeed of the religious sen itself. Nay, even many who are involved in it may be counte acting it by their lives and by their words at other times; b to cite the homely proverb, "More water glideth by the m than wots the miller of."

There is an invisible connexion between things that we not always suspect; and what we have to look at is the gene

* Confess. iv. 1.

† Hist. de la Révolution Française, tom. ii. 384.

result. Now, as a general result, the effect, that must be seen only in thought, as produced indirectly by the successive labours of men described by their friends as "pure in conduct, serene in manners, and of exemplary conversation," here is visible enough. Here's a good world the while! who so gross as not to see it? Look at the inundation below your mill, teeming with what look like new monsters, such as perhaps earth's upward face hath to the marble mansion all above never presented! So "now all you young gents," as the song says, "take warning." For, I warrant you, we shall not hear of godliness; and, to pass over greater mischiefs that may be in store for you, when men would feel not twenty consciences that stood betwixt them and their object, and they have forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, it is not by all pretty oaths that are not dangerous that the majority so influenced will then swear. One might pick up an instance from your own walks, which Plato would have deemed quite to the purpose, though fastidious ears would now hold it too colloquial, and familiar, and puerile for so grave an argument. One might say, that when juveniles or others belonging to such a population affect to use the language of bravado, they will not be content with wishing in an imprecatory way their playmates sugared; nor will it be possible to predicate of such men, young or old, playful or in earnest, that it was more glorious to contend with them, than not to have had an adversary. But what would you have? You suffered to fall to ruin, or you demolished through a whim of scientific people, the ancient dams, and so, of course, you need not wonder that such a flood of discoloured waters should have now passed in consequence by your mill! See how it threatens to sweep away all ancient, time-hallowed landmarks. The whirligig of time brings in his revenges. But you have even done more.

> "Après qu'on eut bien contesté,
> Répliqué, crié, tempêté,"

there was found for a time, in some places, to be little left to destroy. You have, as far as in you lay, acted towards society as you did in the case of our poor Thames. You have turned into it all the corruptions of naturalism, all the impieties of rationalists, all the scepticism of travellers, all the abomination

of libertinism, all the mocking of the humourists when mistake
in those foundations which they build upon. It is not poisone
wholly, for the natural source still each day sends down it
stream of pure fresh waters; but it is not in the state you foun
it in, certainly. What is seen and heard is disagreeable enough
though some may be in doubt respecting its import, causing t
be repeated such a dialogue as we find in Ben Jonson: "It i
not profane," says one, "it is profane," says another; "it is no
profane," rejoins the first, "it is profane," insists the latter
silenced at last by the resolute affirmation of his opponent, tha
"it is not profane;" the "not," of course, still carrying the day
and what is worse, sworn to be made eternal. Heart! can it b
that any grave sir, any rich that has no need, any wise sir, too
at other times, should thus, with his own oaths, make har
means to gull himself? All this has passed through you
sluices, and this same progeny of evils comes from your debate
from your dissension; you are their parents and original, an
we have only glanced at the surface. But meanwhile,

> "——— what it is indeed,
> More suits you to conceive, than me to speak of."

There is great good existing around us in this nineteenth cen
tury. There are facts, the mere thought of which is enough t
make serene and hopeful the darkest hours; but there is grea
mischief at work also, and already a deplorable result. And d
you count yourselves for nothing, gentlemen protestors or in
sinuators, and critics, and deniers, in these later works of dis
paragement and of depreciation; in these ravages of consciences
in which we are more or less all involved; in these diminution
of faith in the masses; in this task so pitilessly pursued fo
three hundred years "and more," for you had forerunners, w
are free to confess, in this dissolution of all restraints; in thi
abandonment of all counterchecks; in this systematic defianc
even of what all former generations of mankind respected; an
in this immense moral ruin now around you, through which
however the Cross still rises so majestically, with its countles
adherents? It would lead us too far to enter upon details. I
is sufficient to say with the old tragic poet, "Whosoever or
hearing divine words is disobedient, thinks not wisely." Who

soever on hearing them is not instantly silent through reverence, as if in accordance with the injunction "Favete linguis," acts not wisely, either in a critical or a philosophic sense. There is one particular however that may be referred to: it is not well then, I would say, to find oneself with men who, through this disobedience, little think that in reviling what they dislike without knowing it, unless by a counterfeit and a sham, they are scoffing even at what antiquity, at least, designated as forming part of the golden words of Pythagoras, who said, "Before sleep thrice pass in review each act of the past day and each omission, and beginning from the first go through them all." To mock at this, though presented as an Ultramontane or Romish element, and in connexion with a legend that you deem ridiculous, for somehow these people have a faculty of clubbing all things together in their minds, when they vent their vain bibble babble, will have no tendency to emancipate or spiritualize life; but neither will it conduce, in the long run, to any one's interior or exterior serenity. Of course, when speaking of this process of animalizing men, one refers only to tendencies which may be, and no doubt often are, resisted; but there, where the evil has been pointed out to us, is the goal of this race, in which the mind engages, either through a voluntary choice or a personal bias, or a family engagement, or a national and even religious duty, as it is thought. A man may hear this shower sing in the wind. It is but reasonable therefore to object to our incurring the danger, and to deem as a disqualification the disposition, whether hereditary or self-acquired, to encounter it.

Moreover, though heaven knows it is not for us to remark it, where all mental discipline, besides linguistic, and grammatical, and scientific culture, is rejected as superstition, there are dangers of a worse character to be apprehended, against which we long ago attempted to stand on our guard by excluding faults of an external kind. "Who knows not," says Richard of St. Victor, "that the motion of the heart is much quicker and facile than that of the body, and therefore the excesses of the will are more copious than those of action? Without doubt much more numerous is the exorbitance of thoughts and affections than the abuse of the senses and of the members. Spiritual corruption is, therefore, more abundant

than corporal corruption, and the congress of spiritual vices more dense than that of bodily vices*." How many sources of disquietude in private life—how many mournful "accomplished facts" in the domain of politics—can be traced to the action of this invisible and spiritual state of things, to this congress at the present day! For when do wills now rest? When do the motions of the heart take a direction favourable to peace and order? When do thoughts now turn on the happiness of a serene hour? The times, we are told, will have it so! Times! the men, the men are not the same; "'tis we are restless, wild, and degenerate from the exalted strain of our great fathers."

Then, again, with the greatest possible desire to exaggerate nothing, and to be fair to all the world, must we not feel that whatever tends to bring back the slavery of the old Pagan schools, the slavery of the master, of the *αὐτὸς ἔφη*, the "ipse dixit," that last word of antiquity, as Ozanam calls it, which, until the Christian philosophy arose, used to be repeated from generation to generation, without any person seeking to be emancipated from it; that whatever tends, I say, to render men, like the Times-ridden people, wholly dependent for their belief and opinions on all great questions respecting subjects, not of science, though of vital interest to mankind, upon some one or other man, whether preacher, lecturer, literary critic, or political journalist, only remarkable for ability and eloquence, and who is bound by his own principles to admit the possibility all the while of his being mistaken as to the main object, can never be favourable to the enjoyment of thoroughly, philosophically, or religiously serene hours? All will, then, be as fluctuating and uncertain as the life or consistency of that individual or journal: while between excessive praise of one, and exaggerated blame of the others, the mind can have no solid ground of stable tranquillity. In fact, it is then floating upon a wild and violent sea, moving each way like drift. One can foresee no other result, even though, like the Manichæan Faustus, the man you pin your faith to may be "disciplinis liberalibus eruditus," or, as St. Augustine says of Victorinus before his conversion, "omnium liberalium doctrinarum peritissimus;" and it is worth

* In Ps. xc.

remarking too, perhaps, how often the abused expression "liberal" is used by Christian antiquity in contrast with the truly liberal doctrines of faith. Then, again, fanaticism, another foe to serenity, will be apt also to creep in and carry the day. "Fanatici — qui circum fana favorem mutuo contrahunt et afflant,"—the fanes will be the rival tabernacles that the favoured orators of the day set up, or get set up for them. "May I venture to say what I think? Well, then, I believe," continues Vauvenargues, "that the superstitions of the populace in its worst debasement will be always found in many men. If an age like ours will no longer believe in sorcery and the sabbath, it will still believe, with as much folly, in Calvin and Luther*." If it is not the individual or the state, it will then be the party, that practically exercises an absolute power over minds. Now this is the thraldom and the spirit to which men subject themselves, having to keep always reforming the reformation, no very easy matter, while renouncing the only authority which is legitimate and effective. Of course, they are sure that they can do it exactly, but it is still the old termination of admirable plans,

"La difficulté fut d'attacher le grelot."

God help poor souls, how idly do they talk! The consequences of renouncing that authority will verify the remark of Cicero, that "men are determined in their judgments more by hatred, or love, or cupidity, or anger, or grief, or joy, or hope, or fear, or error, or by some passions of the mind, than by truth or any principle of justice†." "To be between two religions," says a great author, "the one that which you have not yet absolutely left, and the other that into which you have not yet formally entered,"—which is the condition in which such slavery often places you,—"is insupportable." Is it not startling to find that in the nineteenth century, within the sphere of religion, the old heathen question is again so often suggested, "Cur doctissimi homines de maximis rebus dissentiant?" while others,

* Sur le Caractère des différents Siècles.

† De Oratore, ii.

heavy, sour, sad, and very different from what men should be, are calling out for—

> "A godly, thorough reformation,
> Which always must be carried on,
> And still be doing, never done;
> As if religion were intended
> For nothing else but to be mended."

Balzac, nourished with the old feelings of Christian nobility, points out even what he conceived to be the indignity of following such leaders, saying, "to call those who do so Calvinists is doing too great honour to Calvin. It is to insult the Rohans, and the Colignis, and other great lords, to give them the name of a little sophist who could only pretend to the quality of their chaplain, if they had been guiltless of a most unnoble swerving, and had remained firm as they ought to the religion of their fathers." But, of course, notions of this kind are out of date now, so let them pass.

No doubt, as a recent historian remarks when speaking of a great revolution, in which, after accomplishing much good, sooner or later was combined every element that has ever opposed the great spiritual union that emanates from Calvary, "men easily pardon an order of things in which they have found a place for themselves *." We have lately glanced at an instance; but for all that, we must ask permission here to declare that another disposition against which a reasonable objection may be advanced, on the ground of its incompatibility with the security of internal peace, is that which would leave men depending for their belief in matters of religion on the state collectively, and on civil legislation, interpreted and administered by secular judges. The state, I know, will often speak gently, as Cæsar to his destined victim; who might then repeat with her the lines,

> "He words one, now he words one that I should not
> Be noble to myself ———."

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* Thiers, Hist. de la Révol. Fran.

But believe it, that sooner or later there are great practical evils subversive of the serenity of each man's breast when religious belief is to be determined by great Cæsar's ministers, who, like the Eusebians of old, are often at the bottom sceptics in every thing excepting what regards a purely temporal authority, and the decision of a civil government to which they are devoted, as to the grandest idea of their country, concluding always in the words of our old dramatist,

> "In king's causes I will not stand
> To scholar's arguments."

What a pagan rascal is this! an infidel! If we refer to those ancient times, when paganism, under the form of heresy and schism, attacked Christianity, we shall see proof that the spirit of servility and fawning upon the secular power in matters of religion, which in every age has characterized whatever in the state opposes the deathless plant, was a potent element to disturb serene hours. What an obstacle to them, for example, was presented by that Arian heresy already spoken of, which, as a recent historian remarks, "while seeming to be only an interior dispute within the Christian Church, was in fact only one of the incidents of the struggle between the old world and the new faith!" "Why do not these Arians reckon themselves amongst the pagans?" asked St. Athanasius *. Under its dogmatic form Arianism was the Greek philosophy which, not having been able to destroy the Gospel, tried to corrupt it by an infusion of its own spirit. This is detected in the ingenious simpleness of its language, in the infinite variety of its symbols, and in the subtlety of its metaphysical discussions. Under the vestment of the catechumens it has still the air and accent of the school. Then again, considered in its political character, Arianism, and every other establishment resting on the same base, is only a transformation of the old Roman despotism, which, despairing to annihilate the Church, consents to an alliance with her on her promising to serve it. So this state religion walks surrounded with lictors, or leopards, or

* Orat. iv.

lions and unicorns, or double-headed eagles; it loves the pomp of courts; it dogmatizes after the manner of a judicial formula and of an imperial edict; it has the gesture and the tone of the old Roman prætor *. Such, all through the middle ages, and down to the present hour, continues to be the spirit opposed to that great society of which the poet says,

"——————— often forced to fly,
And doom'd to death, though fated not to die."

For the upholders of such governmental views are ever disposed, even when without intending it, to be swayed more or less by all the old arguments of the Atheists, when they were trying to show that it is for the interest of civil sovereigns, and of all commonwealths, that there should be no religion as an independent power in the state; for they say to themselves, "If there be any greater fear than the fear of the leviathan and civil representative, the whole structure and machine of this great coloss—the state—must needs fall to pieces and tumble down. Religion, then, may frighten men from obeying the laws of their country. Moreover," continues Cudworth, speaking for them, "the power of civil sovereigns, whether of kings or of the majority, is perfectly indivisible; it is either all or nothing; it must be absolute and infinite, or else it is none at all. Now it cannot be so, if there be any other power equal to it to share with it, much less if there be any superior, as that of the Deity, to check it and control it. Wherefore, the Deity must of necessity be removed and displaced to make room for the leviathan to spread itself in. Further, conscience, which religion introduces, for these people ignore the constitution of human nature, or judgment, concerning good and evil, which the state does not pronounce, is incompatible with civil sovereignty. There ought to be no other conscience in a kingdom or commonwealth besides the law of the country; the allowance of any other conscience being, ipso facto, a dissolution of the body politic. Therefore, it must needs be acknowledged that those philosophers who undermine and weaken religion, do highly deserve of civil sovereigns and commonwealths." Such were the argu-

* De Broglie, L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain au IV. Siècle, iv.

ments of the Atheists that, even in our own times, are still unconsciously, as to their parentage, pressed upon governments, though of course, from wanting such a formal intention, in other language. Lord Bolingbroke, indeed, with candour enough, had said expressly, that, in regard to religion, they who have neither means nor opportunities of study must submit their opinions to authority; and to what authority, he asks, "can they resign themselves so properly, and so safely, as to that of the laws of their country?" That might do very well for him, who believed in nothing of the spiritual order. But it is clear at once that such notions constitute an atmosphere in which men who retain any sense of religion at all can have no chance of enjoying the sort of serene existence, intellectual and moral, that is required even for the general purpose which we have now in view. It would never answer on these occasions of seeking mental serenity, with thoughtfulness and honour, to hear cited with applause the constitutions of the kingdom of Sicily, drawn up by Peter des Vignes, under Frederick II., declaring that to discuss the judgments or the choice of the prince, is to commit sacrilege; or the words of Lucas de Penna at the diet of Ronchalia, that the emperor is on earth what God is in heaven; or the definition by Justinian, that "the law is what pleases the prince*." The noisiest and most given to bragging seem often ready to assent to such doctrines; but they that have the voice of lions and the act of hares, are they not monsters? The side for us on such occasions is that which prompts men not to dread when the king cries, Ha! but to reply, Let him cry ha! louder. Certainly it makes one rather indignant to hear old Ben Jonson talking of the brutal vanity and iniquity of the multitude when they dare to censure their sovereign's actions, where they ought wholly to hang on his mouth, as he, to consist of himself and not of others, counsels; that, after God, "a man is to love his prince with his whole heart, reverencing him in whose charge all things, divine and human, are placed." Such "discoveries," as he very aptly styles them, such governmental lessons, are not much mended even when the terms are changed. With a just and innate love

* Digest, lib. i.

of intellectual freedom, our peace would be disturbed most fatally when we should hear counsels like those of the ancient pagan chorus, saying, "Resolve thee to detest whatever the state holds odious; and what is welcome to it, to respect." For then would dispositions be generated like that of Ismene when she says, "To act against the will of the citizens,—and heaven knows what they may not will sometimes,—I am by nature incapable;" and what sounds even worse, minds would be formed like that of the messenger when he says, "It appertains to me by nature to consider all these things less important than my own interest." This is what makes those smiling rogues of whom Shakspeare speaks; that, like rats, oft bite the holy cords atwain which are too intrinse to unloose, that turn their halcyon beaks with every gale and vary of their masters, as knowing nought, like dogs, but following. For them, as the fool says, "court holy-water in a dry house is better than rain out o'door." But it conduces to no one's permanent serenity to rejoice in a clever advocacy of such sentiments, however for a time outwardly successful. What!

> "To hide him from the radiant sun, and solace
> I'the dungeon by a snuff?"

Where such a foundation is laid there must be a consciousness of insecurity, even with non-witted fools, that can hardly be combined with the profound intellectual calm that is an element in the enjoyment of which we speak. "Passion or interest," says a great statesman, whose remark is applicable to the subject before us, "can create zeal, but nothing can give stability and durable uniformity to error. Indolence or ignorance may keep it floating, as it were, on the surface of the mind, and sometimes hinder truth from penetrating; or force may maintain it in possession when the mind assents to it no longer. But such opinions, like human bodies, tend to their dissolution from their birth. They will be rejected in theory where men can think, and in practice where men can act with freedom. The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart goes all decorum. They maintain themselves no longer than the same means of seduction which first introduced them, or the same circumstance which first imposed them, attend and continue to support them.

Men are born into them, and held down in them, by chains of circumstances. Break but these chains, and the mind returns with a kind of intellectual elasticity to its proper object, truth *." It is amusing to observe how Swift rallies the victims of this error, though with what consistency it is not for us to inquire. "As the civil power," he says, "can certainly do ten thousand things more than it ought, so there are several things which some people may think it can do, although it really cannot. For it unfortunately happens that edicts which cannot be executed will not alter the nature of things. Put the case, that walking on the slack-rope were the only talent required by act of parliament for making a man a bishop; no doubt when a man had done his feat of activity in form, he might sit in the House of Lords, put on his robes and his rochet, go down to his palace, receive and spend his rents; but it requireth very little Christianity to believe this tumbler to be one whit more a bishop than he was before, because the law of God hath otherwise decreed; which law, although a nation may refuse to receive, it cannot alter in its own nature. But you say what the parliament can annul it can make. Indeed! Cannot I stand over a man with a great pole and hinder him from making a watch, although I am not able to make one myself? If I have strength enough to knock a man on the head, doth it follow I can raise him to life again? The parliament may make laws, indeed, and call them canon and ecclesiastical laws, and oblige all men to observe them under pain of high treason. And so may I, who love as well as any man to have in my own family the power in the last resort, take a turnip, then tie a string to it, and call it a watch, and turn away all my servants if they refuse to call it so too." Come, now, there is a candid as well as a witty acknowledgment, without any flying out; there is mannerly forbearance, and, as Toinette—who would have done very well in our boat, or during our field ramble—says, "it's a pleasure when people can answer one another gently so;" but still we must be permitted to think that with truth appearing so naked on our side, men who lay themselves open to such sarcasms will not find in the consciousness of possessing it a source of perma-

* Dissertation on Parties, 46.

nent serenity. Upon the whole, there can be no intimate, quiet, durable satisfaction, in the thought that the religion which one follows, which of course involves the highest interest of our inmost selves, owes its form or its articles, its present condition or its original modification and adjustments, to either a man or a party of men admiring him, to a tyrant or a king, to a set of courtiers or a cabal of nobles, to the policy of a dynasty, or to the vote of a parliament; to the will of a mob, or to the decree of a nation; to the character of a race, or to private judgment emanating from one or more individuals; or, in fine, to public opinion, wildly left to itself without any divine guarantees, and acting by means of the press inspired by no other influence.

Repugnance, meanwhile, to the chair of Peter, and to the central authority of a common father, can never even in a mere social and political point of view, become an element of peace. To use the words of a celebrated historian, after relating how that authority was restored in France, "there is no more admirable institution than that which maintains unity of faith, and prevents, as far as possible, religious quarrels; for there is nothing more odious than a crowd of sects, disputing, maligning each other, fighting with all their energy if they are in their first zeal; or, if they have become accustomed to live side by side, looking at each other with jealous eyes. The quarrels of sects are the most insupportable of all quarrels. Disputation belongs to science, which it animates, sustains, and conducts to discoveries. But what does disputing in matters of religion lead to, unless to uncertainty, and the ruin of all belief? Religious quarrels are either cruel and sanguinary, or else withering, sterile, and bitter. In science let there be inquiry, but in religion faith. Discussion in matters of science, faith in those of religion—there is the true and the useful; and what maintains this order is the central authority. It is the work of ages," he adds in the modern style of many of his countrymen, "and ages have done well in forming it. For the government of minds it is the best and most beneficent institution that can be imagined; 'and when I resolve to maintain it,' said the general Bonaparte, 'I do so not through the obstinacy of a fanatic, but from the dictate of reason, while, as for the temporal interest of a nation, let the philosophers try their best, and they will find

nothing stronger and more effectual than this very same institution which excites their scorn*." That oldest of all existing governments, even viewed exclusively on the side of its advantages to common life, must possess an attraction to minds disposed for the enjoyment of serenity. For that government, even in its civil character, has never represented what is antipodal to it—worldliness or war, never barbarism, destruction, and plunder, never oppression, conscription, sacrilege, and impiety. This is a great deal as the world goes. "Were it not," says Philippe de Commines, for the disputes between the Colonnas and Ursinis, "la terre de l'Eglise serait la plus heureuse habitation pour les sujets qui soit en tout le monde, car ils ne payent ne tailles, ne guères autres choses, et seraient toujours bien conduits; car toujours les papes sont sages, et bien conseillers†." Men who speak or write for what is called the reading public in England in our times, are not exactly disposed to take this view of the matter; but one of the most popular of European authors, though I must acknowledge also an author celebrated for the court he always pays to the gentle and the serene, so that on that account he may be suspected of partiality on this point, adopts it in one of the liveliest of his tales. For when he represents his hero desiring repose, and freedom, and happy days, he makes him take the road to Rome; and he accounts for his doing so by exclaiming, "Parlez-moi, pour être libre, d'un pays esclave du saint père!" The secular government of nations has, indeed, often co-operated with the spiritual, and partaken of its character, without detriment to the happiness of the people. But it has oftener pulled against it; and what is there, I should like to know, in the state, then, as opposed to this power, that men should fall so desperately in love with it? Is it all this persecution under pretext of protecting religion,—all this burning of heretics by order of its own institutions, as in Spain, at one time,—all this appropriating to itself the patrimony of the poor, as in England under the Norman princes? or later, is it all this conscription, and slaughtering, and crippling, and torturing, and coercing, and destroying,

* Thiers, Hist. du Consulat, liv. xii.

† VII. liv. c. 10.

and plundering, and lying, and annexing, that enchants us w
it? Or do we think that in every country we can be sure
always realizing the British constitution, if we only overthr
altars, desecrate ancient religious houses, and come to a rupt
with the spiritual authority? To satisfy inquiries of this nat
a man must consult history, or at least the experience of Eur
for the last fifty years; but we can promise you, that if he
plies in the right way, he will not have to wait long for
answer.

The absence of faith, however, according to a state of thin
brought about by men who cannot in conscience bring the
selves to think with others "on religious matters;" who
said to "inquire for themselves respecting the real sense
divine acts and words;" who study and affirm that no oth
but themselves study the texts and written testimonies; w
compare, criticize, and arrive by those means at a form of Chr
tian doctrine which consists in admitting the existence of God,
an emanation more or less direct from the Divinity,—an inspi
tion from on high in life,—such simplicity of system, I s
that seems rather like the absence of what used to be call
Christian faith, and the substitution of words for things
regard to this whole domain of thought, constitute no doubt
principal danger which is to be avoided by those who seek t
enjoyment of that profound serenity from which every tru
happy and contented hour must derive its vital element.

Adopting a comparison from the ancients, one might say th
the system of Christian antiquity, involving the presence
faith, like a river from the Apennines, flows from the comm
elevations of the wise, and descends into a certain Ionian se
full of harbours; but that this new philosophy, which suppos
its absence, having but a spirit of persuasion only, descends in
this Tuscan, and rocky, and sinistrous sea, in which prude
Ulysses himself wandered.

Of the real evils of life, as well as of the common imped
ments to ordinary contentment, it is easy to discover that prid
and intellectual pride, pride of the spirit, as independent of bod
as if it really animated creatures of a higher origin than ou
selves, and of a far more wretched state than ours, is still t
source and the bond. Richard of St. Victor shows that n

even the life of contemplation is exempt from the danger. "The quality of contemplation," he says, "varies. It involves comprehensiveness of mind, elevation of mind, and sometimes aberration of mind. 'Leva in circuitu oculos tuos et vide.' Lo! you are referred to comprehensiveness. 'Qui sunt isti qui ut nubes volant?' Lo! elevation of mind. 'Ego dixi in excessu meo, omnis homo mendax.' Lo! aberration of mind*." In ordinary life, during these moments of excess, to what lengths will not some men proceed? liking almost disorder, according to the remark of Rivarol, when speaking of the English, "as if order seemed to them to be something too much resembling servitude;" or excusing their own want of energy by a "cui bono," as if all men were alike deceived and prostrated. This fatal inheritance of an imaginary independence—for it has been often transmitted as if by an hereditary descent, backed by some great name of imposing genius—cannot be combined with serene enjoyment.

"Let us acknowledge it," says Balzac, "though to the shame of human reason and of the subtlety of the Sophists, a great mind quite alone by itself is a great instrument for committing faults; and if the requisite judgment does not put weight in it, and soften it to use, and accommodate it to examples and practice, without doubt this penetrating vivacity will be more fit for agitating questions of metaphysics than for giving good advice, and for acting well and generously." "After doing all I could," says St. Francis de Sales, speaking of Theodore Beza, "and forgetting nothing I could think of to draw out some spark of sentiment from him, I perceived that his heart had not been in the least touched, and that it was all stone†." Nice companion that for a summer's evening! "The truth is, human actions require to be managed humanly, that is, in some respects, sentimentally, by possible and familiar means, in a way that has to do with the body as well as with the mind, by reasons which sometimes fall to the province of the senses, instead of remaining always in the upper regions of the soul." But against this ordination the pride of the spirit has a tendency to revolt, and to draw the whole man, and, what is

* Benjamin Major, lib. v. c. 2. † Lett. 25.

worse, whole nations, after it. Then at first, and perhaps for long time, all seems to answer to its wishes. "It is a fine ti in philosophy," says M. de Sacy, "as in politics," and he mig have added, in religious matters, "when every one is in oppo tion; all very well while it lasts. You let yourself be bor along with the torrent; you only see people who encourage y and admire you. The most obscure and incompetent acquire reputation for being of the dominant opinion. The individ mind is merged in the general mind. All that is wanting the pass-word. With that you are fêted, caressed, adored; y have talent, virtue. It is a delightful dream. Yes; but b ware of the awakening, it is very bitter. The awakening when there is nothing to attack, nothing to destroy; when philosophy as in politics and religion, you have to pass from t opposition to the side of government and order*." The fact however, that on such occasions one has hardly a right to su pose that such a wish even will exist, there being so much ti is rather calculated to discourage apostles who are not, or ca not logically be, sure of their own mission. Therefore, on t whole, even in the midst of your triumph, will you need Gl ter's words,—

> "I pray thee, sort thy heart to patience;
> These few days' wonder will be quickly worn."

This kind of pride, then, concealed under pretensions of most imposing character, constitutes a rock on which both m and nations suffer shipwreck, losing what alone concerns here, their power of enjoying a serene hour. Such is the pri ciple at work in secret in the depths and throwing up the reefs which mariners regard in trembling, and which wou have no name if they did not cause disasters, dreadful and irr parable. There is more here to fear than even nature, in h ordinary normal state, has ever yielded, for here are greate storms and tempests than almanacks can report, terrible wind words, signs of a windy brain. "Those who have sailed roun the world," says Voiture, "know of only thirty-two winds This other blast, to start our quiet, is of men's own creatio

* Variétés littéraires, tom. ii. p. 5.

"O ventum horribilem!" It was said of old by Cicero to some Sophists, that they reversed the object of wisdom, substituting, and in their pride too, doubt for certainty: "vos autem quum perspicuis dubia debeatis illustrare, dubiis perspicua conamini tollere*." Yet, against pride itself, they will talk as glib, methinks, as he that farms the monuments. But have we not a right to exclaim with the old dramatist,

> "——— Must you, O impudence,
> Disturb the quiet of our thoughts and dwelling?
> Gentlemen! rather hinds ———."

"I do not meddle," says Balzac, "with that science of discord which cuts into a thousand shreds the robe of our Lord, and brings an action against each word of his Testament. It embitters minds more than it settles matters, and multiplies doubts instead of augmenting charity. If I had the choice, I would rather have less of what puffs up and a little more of what edifies. Truth is not the price of heated blood or of an excited imagination." At least we on the river look for other music than "the bitter clamour of two eager tongues," however some may like such throwing about of brains; and however fond of novelty and of phenomenal exceptions we may be in other respects, there are still some old sheltering-places that no one would consciously quit, unless he were as distracted as Lear in the storm. It does not promote serene hours to make the mind wander in darkness over an unknown region pelted by tempests, even till unfenced desolation leave them as naked as the vulgar air, after leaving a spot of shelter and repose congenial to it, though it be with beggars lying upon straw, which, after all, is wholesome and comfortable; for, as the same author observes, shelter is what was first given to us, and ordained for us, just as the tempest came later, and, as it were, by accident. Falsehood is born from its older contrary. It has need of truth to be falsehood; it could not act if it had not it for enemy, nor subsist except by the principles which it combats. The good seed was sown the first, but the enemy who sowed the evil seed came last. There never would have been a false, if there had not been a true

* De Finibus, iv.

religion. On the former, when it assumes the fairest shape, an as the poet says,

> "——— Of decent discipline,
> Shows affectation of an ancient line,
> And fathers, councils, church, and church's head,
> Are on her reverend phylacteries read,"

the brand of novelty is still visible; for as he truly adds,

> "Her house not ancient, whatsoe'er pretence
> Her clergy-heralds make in her defence."

"Is it possible, then," asks St. Francis de Sales, directing to th old shelter, "that this gentleman should believe the who Church to have erred, and that people of the new learnin whose wild belief on every wave is tossed, should have so ha pily discovered the truth, and that they have never erred i their interpretation of Scripture? Whence can have come th universal knowledge of the sense of Scripture in these head that they are always in the right and we always in the wrong so that he must leave us to adhere to them, blown upon by ever wind, to take up with these swiftly changing opinions, and dis card all that the holy have revered in calm sweet stillness, sinc the days of the Apostles*?" But again and again one ma well exclaim, What a substitution is this! Sense, sure yo have, but sure that sense is apoplexed; for sense was ne'er s thralled but it reserved some quantity of choice to serve in suc a difference. Are eyes without feeling, feeling without sight Only a sickly part of one true sense could so mope. For loo here on this and upon this: the one almost as infinite as al the other blank as nothing! Frequently, however, it woul seem as if in point of fact there was no desire or attempt tha any thing whatever, as far at least as regards the general world should be substituted. In our times,

> "Though three centuries are scarcely run,
> Since the new honours of this sect begun,"

it almost looks as if for the masses there was to be no alterna

* Lett. 542.

ive; for we can hardly accept as substitution any of the visionary schemes or illogical rhapsodies of such writers as George Sand. Here then again is an obstacle to all serene hours; for intervals of this kind have never existed where the human mind was in a condition of such utter abandonment. Though a development of this thought may savour too much of a philosophic discussion to suit these hours, we can hardly pass on without briefly remarking that it would be only reasonable if the undertakers and patrons of the new plans for the amelioration of our race, which require for commencement a total clearance of the ground from all that was raised and added by the civilization of faith, were to let us know in the first instance what they really understand by the good of humanity, or by the "summum bonum." The ancients had in regard to these matters their principles, such as they were. Cicero could always appeal in his speeches to what his auditors thought was pleasing or displeasing to the gods. The Chinese, the Africans, the savages, all have their dogmas more or less distinct, according to which they think and act and enjoy, at least in some degree or other, the peace of soft consistency. But you, who go on in the name of reform, and progress, and civilization, to destroy, repudiate, cancel, overthrow, change, pull down, silence, imprison, and kill, have, after all your boasts and pretensions, done nothing to recommend yourselves, even for a hearing. until you are prepared to let us know what are your principles and your objects. If we set aside what the love of country may require, which is a question on which we need not enter here, and what certain wild visionaries are publishing, from a suspicion that a religion of some kind is wanting, there is an absolute silence on this point, which cannot indeed surprise any one; for it would not, I believe, be a very pleasing study worthy of the gravity of wise men, or compatible with the existence of conscience in any state of perversion, to have to analyze the philosophy, in its relation to what the general good of humanity requires, of such men as are now acting the part of pioneers in this kind of warfare, or perhaps of their British admirers; but how can any one of common sense be expected to accept their claims of this order until he knows what it is that they believe, and until by means of that knowledge he can judge whether what they recommend is or is not worthy of

approval? Then, again, must we not take into account t moral effects which remain in the mind after the first excitem of change has subsided? How opposed to any thing like seren are these results? Clouds there will be, even after the fi collision has passed. Only think of the mortal weariness, a anxiety, and disorder, and discouragement which ensue fr assisting over and over again at the empty verbal mystificati which so often involves fresh storms and blindness as an acco paniment! "Well hast thou talked evil," says Agamemnon, if taunting him who invited us to leave the shelter; "hate is a too clever tongue." "It is each moment," as Silvia sa "a fine volley of words, gentlemen, and quickly shot off though all the while

> "These sentences, to sugar or to gall,
> Being strong on both sides, are equivocal;
> But words are words."

Sure, I delight much in these toys; I can with as much patien hear the mariners chide in a storm. And are those who se serene hours to welcome such intruders, with their ambiguiti their inconsistencies, their tempests of disputation, or th hypocritical calms and smiles, more cutting still?

> "Must a man with any heart commend against his conscience

what our old poet calls

> "Such stupid blasphemy and nonsense?"

Nay, if they do nothing but speak nothing, they shall l nothing here.

In fine, to view this subject in still a different light, the i distinct fear of truth which often accompanies such aberration settling down, as we so often find them, as opinions of positio rather than as convictions, constitutes another disqualificatio as far as our immediate purpose is concerned. You want to fe and behold the storm; well, we have not long to wait to witnes your misgivings. When meeting wanderers of this kind, on may address them in the words of Tony to the two young tra vellers, "Why, gentlemen, if you know neither the road yo are going, nor where you are, nor the road you came, the firs

thing I have to inform you is, that—you have lost your way." But, whatever face they may put on it, the situation cannot be comfortable for themselves. At least, there's no thoroughly enjoying a serene hour, as we understand it, under such circumstances.

Since the sage, as Aristippus says, is sober on the day of the Bacchanals, since no one does greatly care to be deceived, we might have expected your grave men to be wise on days of fasting and devotion, or, as they would say, their days of calm investigation. Scepticism itself, as to this great point, one might have thought would lead them to acquiescence in what was required from the Mount, that they might not, as one of their leaders even says, "make the dreadful experiment of entering or keeping on paths of their own, or of others like themselves, of which they can know neither the dangers nor the end; for though no danger be seen by them, yet darkness, ignorance, and blindness, are no manner of security." One might have supposed, at all events, that they would be loath to die in a wrong cause, or in a cause that might be wrong on their own showing, and, as Ascanio adds, "be mistaken in another world." But it is then, even when they seem to invoke peace, or feel themselves at the extremity, that these sagacious critics seek refuge behind weak outworks, making important things small as nothing, invite others to be illogical and perplexed with them, and to mistake a wind-blown hedge-side for the sheltered one where they lay secure; which is not certainly the direct and readiest way, under whatever circumstances we find ourselves, to arrive at contentment; for whatever we may be doing we all want shelter, and even some material object, however inadequate it may seem, to keep us as it were company. See how the boy bathing eschews the naked beach, and nestles by the side of the barrier or the old boat drawn ashore, as if they afforded him a certain shelter. Well, in regard to mind, it is somewhat in this way that we all act. But strategetically considered, whoever succeeds in defending the position of these people with their shelter such as it is, might stop a royal army from a windmill, and dispute against it the passage of a broken bridge. With an eye to the storm, it is taking refuge under an isolated tree that invites the lightning.

"Je laisse à penser si ce gîte étoit sûr."

"What makes me pity persons in error," says a deep thinker, "is the fact that they are never sufficiently deceived. In the thickest errors there are interstices through which the truth pierces; and when truth meddles with what does not resemble it, it spoils all." Accordingly, the soul-sickening sense of insecurity follows often upon these choices of opinion; then, while lying on the grass in the sunshine, we have long pauses in the conversation, or heavy sighs, or deprecatory words, demanding a respite from thought. The slightest allusion to things of the ancient faith seems to inspire melancholy. Your companion begins to communicate his sadness to yourself, and, as far at least as he is concerned, truth itself, of which a vague consciousness may remain as to its existence somewhere, is feared. A cloud of words, of course, envelopes this misgiving. Men will look upon their own boots, as the clown says, and sing, pick their teeth and sing, ask questions and sing; but for all the rollicking it is then truth itself that is feared. We knew the time when all the day long he was mild and affable, but now, as it were by fits and starts, do you not observe the strangeness of his altered countenance? With what a majesty he bears himself! How insolent he is become, how proud, peremptory, and unlike himself! All this is through inward misgiving. But "a foolish waste, forsooth, of the tongue is this," as the old poet says, "to fear wicked and empty terrors." How much happier, how much more serene is he who can say with the emperor and philosopher, "If any one can convince me that I think or act wrongly, with a joyful and grateful mind I am ready to change my opinion and action; for I follow truth, which never injures any one, while they are hurt who persist in their error or their ignorance*!" But when the comforts of life, as they are called, come to be mixed up with the question, it is not all men, even in Christian times, who can give such a testimony of themselves. Far otherwise; and so when some young Fairthorn, on a holiday, will say abruptly, "I have been thinking," there will be a different sort of Darrell at his elbow to reply with his mechanical

* Marc. Anton. lib. vi.

irony, "I am sorry for you; try not to do so again." And it is no wonder he should say so; for 'tis his best policy to be ignorant; since while dead or blunt truths may be accepted as harmless, what a great author calls sapling truths, or trenchant truths, are dangerous; for, as he says, "one such truth, thoroughly accepted, connects itself strangely with others, and there is no saying what it may lead us to*." In fact, it may lead to the state of mind ascribed to Javert, the minister of law, in the celebrated romance. After owing his life to his intended victim, there was a sudden, inexplicable revolution in his ideas. It could not be described by words. He who had never known but one road now saw two before him, and these in a contrary direction. Which was the right road? Is he to give up all his ancient notions? and to reverse all his own previous judgments? He was overwhelmed. What was he to do? To go on was evil, to rest where he was, evil. Is he to stultify his own character? to be dishonoured in the eyes of his former associates? Shame waiting for him, whatever he decides on. Return he cannot, nor continue where he is. To shift his being is to exchange one misery for another. And then to be obliged to think! He was not accustomed to think, and the obligation to think now was singularly distressing to him. Yet he must needs consult his conscience after such an awakening, and render an account of himself to himself. This was what made him shudder—to think of deciding against the law! against the Privy Council, against the social and judicial organization of his country! to substitute his own judgment for that of King, Lords, and Commons! Was not that an unqualifiable offence? What should he do? Why, of course, go on as he always lived. But something now for the first time barred the way on that side. What could it be? Is there any thing in the world above the Parliament and its authority? He felt utterly bewildered. A faith condemned by law proved all of a sudden to be true! all the history known to him requiring to be rewritten, and that for him to undertake! Was it not fearful to think of putting himself above the law? Here his meditations became terrible. He felt a weight over him. All the axioms which had hitherto

* Ruskin.

guided him through life seemed to be crumbling away. Malefactors to turn out martyrs, idolaters saints, things that he used to treat as lies and follies, to come back to him as realities! Sir Thomas More, and Fisher, and a thousand others, appearing behind him encircled with light! He felt something horrible penetrating his soul. Admiration of men of a decried creed! Can it be possible? In vain he struggled against it. He was reduced to confess the sublimity of these wretches. That was something odious. These men, charitable, devout, honourable, more angels than men, and he obliged to confess that such monsters existed. There was no remaining in this state. Undoubtedly he had not surrendered without resistance to these monsters, to these infamous angels, to these hideous heroes, that filled him with as much anger as stupefaction. He would have liked to have devoured them; but each time he heard a voice, a strange voice, crying to him, "That's right—betray the just, then ask for Pontius Pilate's basin, and wash your claws." Then his reflections turned on himself, and by the side of these men glorified he fancied he saw himself degraded. His supreme agony was the breaking down of confidence. He was uprooted. The law was no longer a truncheon in his hand. He had to do with scruples of an unknown kind. There arose within him a sentimental revelation entirely distinct from a legal affirmation, which last had hitherto been his only rule. To remain an honest man was not enough now. A whole order of unexpected facts rose up and subdued him: a new world appeared to his soul. Devotion, mercy, indulgence, pity, conquering severity, the possibility of a tear in the eye of authority, a kind of godlike justice contrary to man's justice! He perceived thus in the darkness the fearful rising of an unknown new sun. He was dazzled and horrified. He said to himself, then it might be true, after all—law might be wrong! authority at fault! The rule false! The monstrous might turn out to be divine! His old fond ideal was vanishing away. How was he to explain such a change? He took his head in his two hands, but he could not satisfy himself. Had he not always done his duty? and now it turns out that there is something more to be done! Hitherto he had looked on the Church as part of the State, as an august fragment of the social aggregate. Order was enough for him. His superior was

the crown, his director the Parliament, and now he is to have another superior, of whom he had never thought—God. He felt overwhelmed in presence of this new Chief. He did not know how to act under Him. One thing too, at all events, was certain. He had already allowed himself to be of a different opinion from the law of the land. He had done that. He could be no longer sure of himself. His reasons even escaped him—he felt giddy. He had always hitherto lived on that blind confidence which an ignorant probity engenders. That confidence failed him now. What he had believed was disproved, and things that he had detested besieged him inexorably. It was necessary for him to become another man. He suffered the strange torture of a conscience operated on for cataract. He saw what he did not wish to see; he saw himself emptied, useless, his past life out of joint, dissolved. There was no longer occasion for him in the world. There are, you perceive, but few words in the passage that it was necessary to change, in order to make it applicable to the case before us. Upon the whole, then, one may infer from it that for persons previously in this condition of false confidence and of servile dependence, some truths are really in one sense dangerous, and some thoughts to be avoided, through a foolish and most bitter fear, as leading to a knowledge that is not at first welcome. Therefore, as the Duke of Florence hints in an old play, there are many to say with him, with honour prorogued even till a Lethe'd dulness, while standing by every thing but what they owe allegiance to—standing by their order, which forsooth they only compromise—standing by the country, which they all the while betray to the worst evil, if they could only be brought to see it,

> "—— 'Tis not good to be busy
> In search of these unwelcome certainties;
> There's hope while things are clouded in suspicion."

With Swift's sly goddess they conclude—

> "There is on both sides much to say,
> We'll hear the cause another day;"

or they act as Dryden describes them, after hearing the Hind,

"Nor would the Panther blame it, nor commend,
But with affected yawnings at the close,
Seemed to require her natural repose."

And so the mode of free thinking, as the poet Gray remarks, gives place to the mode of not thinking at all. Consequently

"Year after year the cause is spun,
And still stands where it first begun."

They act on the whole, in regard to what they "establish," like Don Quixote, when he did not wish to try again his improved skull-cap, after seeing its weakness once exposed, feeling in his soul an oppugnancy to any disturbance by doubt of its own broodings. "Not altogether approving," says Cervantes, "of his having broken it to pieces with so much ease, to secure himself from the like danger for the future, he made it over again, fencing it with small bars of iron within, in such a manner that he rested satisfied of its strength; and without caring to make a fresh experiment on it, he approved and looked upon it as a most excellent helmet." So do these men, busied about a counterfeit assurance, affect to rest satisfied, and deprecate any fresh movement in the matter, saying to those who would propose it, "face about to some other discourse. We cannot relish this," and they might add,

"For, well you know, we of the modern side
Must keep aloof from strict arbitrement;
And stop all sight-holes, every loop, from whence
The eye of reason may pry in upon us."

In truth they are not men over valiant; for at the bottom, with all their braggadocio airs, they are "weaker than a woman's tear, tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance." Their invocation might be offered in the words of Ben Jonson,

"Light! I salute thee, but with wounded nerves,
Wishing thy golden splendour pitchy darkness."

When will this fearful slumber have an end? But we must deem ineligible such persons, so wanting in disinterested conviction, so sure to be all for dogged resistance, taunting scoffs, lazy indifference, or idle disputation, meriting Cicero's qualifica-

tion of "Græculos homines contentionis cupidiores quam veritatis"—or perhaps verifying to a degree of minuteness that is almost ludicrous, the very words of Solomon, "Sapientior sibi videtur piger septem viris loquentibus sententias."

Worldliness, that was on a former occasion rejected for other reasons, and which never hopes more heaven than rests in money, is here again pressing forward as so much pure earth, to make us gravitate to a still lower level, till each resembles your fine elegant companion, that can rise and stoop almost together, like an arrow—shoot through the air as nimbly as a star, turn short as doth a swallow, and be here and there, and here and yonder all at once, present to any humour, all occasions, and change a visor swifter than a thought, saying with Sir Politick Would-be whom we formerly met,—

> "And then for your religion, profess none,
> But wonder at the diversity of all."

And this is said, in order that men may appear only the more obedient to a law of nature for their doubts, the truth being, as Madame de Maintenon said, "that all errors in regard to religion seem indifferent to those who are not what our fathers used to call the Faithful."

Then, again, social exigencies are urged which cannot, for all that, quiet inward misgivings. Then, perhaps, as was said to Gloster,

> "Thy wife is proud; she holdeth thee in awe,
> More than God, or religious churchmen, may."

Each expert, with feigned humility, cries then, "No one can be sure. You only follow a sect like ourselves. Young Charbon the Puritan, and old Poysam the Papist, are in one and the same position in that respect. Oh! 'twill be excellent to think the same of all; and since it is not safe for a wise man to speak with confidence, 'twere pity we, who only follow such a one at a distance, should lose his privilege."

> "Commend the times, your thoughts correct,
> And follow the prevailing sect."

And so, after separating and dividing men, "all the peace they

make in their cause, when it is defended with any spirit, is calling both the parties knaves."

Yet the kind of religion, if it can be called so, that follows is worth noticing ere we conclude; for, as a great critic* observes, "its originality consists in its insipidity. It is a mere moral system, of which the minister is only a man to keep off what is disorderly, and the common member, one who hopes sincerely that there will be another life, without feeling very sure about it. It is a religion of doubt, and not one of faith; of opinions which are recognized by those who hold them as changeable, and as being such as ought to change, perhaps every fifty years —a gentle theism, rationalized, and raised to a degree of sensitiveness that might ravish a Bernardine of St. Pierre, and move Marmontel to tears." But all the while it should pass under another name. "For such philosophy," says Balzac, "is a distant source from which the common people cannot draw." The habit of doubt which some in latter times have thought to recommend by qualifying it as philosophy, is not better suited to them or to human nature. Comparing it to a dress, we might say that it is not our style. Let a few Sophists wear it if they choose; let them be stared at to their heart's content; but for the vast majority of men and women, for the enjoyment of a serene hour, which is the point of view with which we are here concerned, it is not suitable. These eloquent men, such pathetic mourners over the difficulties of philosophic and religious truth, are but poor creatures at the best, though capable of imparting their malady to others. "Positively," as Lord Dundreary, in a humorous pamphlet, is represented replying to one of them, "fellers of this kind ought always to live together in one house, and read their books to one another, though the brethren are not likely to dwell in unity; for of one of themselves they are now saying, 'Oh, he is mad!' and of another, 'he is lunatic.'"

At the same time, one must be willing to admit, and repeat it again and again, in conclusion of the day's discussion, that we have been speaking of general and logical consequences, rather than of exceptionless and inevitable issues. It is with men as

* Sainte-Beuve.

with nations; it is with the private enjoyment of serene hours as with the public prosperity of a people. True, as Balzac says, "such times, such characters, have not been always fatal to a country, or to the peace of private men during the brief moments we are contemplating. Who can devise a total opposition? No one. But we must observe," as he says, "whether what we approve of in them both be not the result of better times and better dispositions, and of the warmth which remains after a fire has gone out—if it be not the virtues of fathers which sustain the infirmity of children; for in fact, after a long period of order, things go on pretty much of themselves, and the alteration is not at once perceptible,"—

> "As fester members rot but by degrees,
> Till bones, and flesh, and sinews fall away."

Error as well as guilt, like poison given to work a great time after, may not for a long while bite the spirits. It is the nature of the things of this world to pass with difficulty from one state to another; so that if a republic, or this little image of it consisting in a social party or an individual mind, should remain firm and serene at such times, and when such dispositions begin to exist, both may be owing their repose to the good and solid foundations which were laid in former ages and in earlier youth, over which may have been only lately placed lime and plaster, which are not quick enough in their effects to destroy what was established in wiser generations, and in a season of greater innocence in the mind of individuals themselves. But, in conclusion, I would ask, is there on the whole in life any thing more sad to the heart than to witness the convulsive and vain efforts, the palpable misgivings of some right good fellow, ten thousand times perhaps morally better than one's self, when he is presented with the truths of catholicity, which he tries to evade, without being able evidently to inspire either himself with any confidence, or you with a well-grounded hope that he will have the wish to break through his present entanglements, or that his ignorance is invincible? No; in the whole dark catalogue of sad things there is nothing, when you think of it, more sad than this,—nothing more calculated to make you sick of the philosopho-theological jargon employed by those reckless and

most illogical innovators who introduced such causes of miser amongst us, and established a permanent source of supernatura sorrow and of unmeaning separations, to dispel not alone th sweet and glorious ideal, but the real, attainable, and positiv harmony of those who love serene hours.

But we will talk no more of the matter. We have had enoug of this now. As Slender says, "I had rather than forty shilling I had my book of songs and sonnets here." You, who have will ingly reposed in this little wayside-inn garden of our discussion as it were, to use the simile of Cicero, will, perhaps, be anxiou to rise up and leave it, as being a place of which the neighbour hood is neither healthy nor agreeable—like meadows, yet no dry with miry slime left on them by a flood, or what is mor dangerous, and to use his very words, as if you had been de tained in the Pontine Marshes—for, in fact, it is not a healthy air that rests over a battle-field, let who will conquer; and her besides, our foes were so enrooted with our friends, that pluck ing to unfix an enemy, we do unfasten so and shake a frien the time misordered crowding us to th monstrous form; therefore, feeling that you have, in mind a least, stopped long enough in a region where combats have bee often held,—where, literally, you may be said to have been ex changing ideas with those who, on that subject at least, seem t have nothing very charming to offer, you may propose to fl from a haunted place, and hasten on your way. Well, such weariness and apprehensions are natural enough. It is an ex hausted atmosphere that we have been passing through, o which all breatheable air is fast escaping. To me the entir relation was an ague. But without having wished to invok contests, or intended in reference to them to echo Cæsar' words, that war is order, it was necessary in times like our that we should have engaged in these considerations; there wa no help for it; the bitter disposition of the age would have i so. We did not make love to this employment; but the sol drift of our purpose extended not a frown further than wa needful to release some from what we believe to be an evi charm, to break its bonds, to restore their senses, that they should be themselves, and that too in a world where, if things are well considered, no man is his own. However, having sug

gested all this, we may now pass to other scenes more suitable to our professed object; for, in fine, we must think of our covenant to be merry, in spite of fortune and her riddles. As for his dull tune we have been compelled to listen to, it was as flat and fulsome to our ears as howling after music; though, after all, and that we may leave nothing out, there are considerations rising out of the subject suggested on the river in concluding such an argument, which are calculated—let us confess it—if not to satisfy mere logicians and impassioned doctors, at least to keep ordinary people in good humour with persons who are sometimes in bad humour wanting all the qualities that we require for our excursionists, and to reconcile them generally to the thought of there being such objectors, pedants, philosophers, scorners, critics, and so forth,—such neighbours, if not actually at their elbow, at least near enough to be in their thoughts. It is no doubt taking rather a low view of things to suggest that such people are rendering an important service all the while to the cause of serenity, which they seem little inclined to benefit; but somehow there are times when we are not indisposed to prefer a low view to one more elevated; and this is one of them. Now then, in the first place, the fine, delicate, subtle criticism of some who are in secret alliance with these silly people, their own masterly defence of certain truths that yield common ground for us to join them on in their invectives against superstition and the besetting faults which degrade sometimes the profession of truth—though perhaps all this is beside the matter we had in hand when combatting the main body of the army, which can scarcely be thought to render such service of that kind,—still such achievements are emblazoned on the banner of our antagonists, and we ought to salute with respect and gratitude. But then, in the second place, what is more to the point, it is certainly true that the Governor of the world is able to turn every thing to a useful purpose, and we is tempted to conclude at the end of this long day's discussion that He does so in regard to the very matters that we have been now considering; for without that criticism, without those correctives, without those lessons of an enemy, there is no saying what we might not ourselves have turned out. Why is it essential that there should be errors? Doubtless it is for the

reason that every power incurs two kinds of danger; as Vill main remarks*, "enemies from without, and the results of full and excessive victory, without surviving obstacles and wit out free remonstrances." It is better in general that thing should not be arranged for us exactly as we ourselves migh have wished. It is an old observation, for that matter, and pe haps it will be more discreet to give it in ancient words tha in our own, which might be misinterpreted. "It seems to m then," says Philippe de Commines, "that God has create nothing in this world, either men or beasts, for which He h not made or permitted something contrary to keep it in fear a humility. Thus Belgium has its Ghent, France has Englan England has Scotland, Spain has Portugal; the princes of Ita have the free towns Venice, Florence, and Genoa, and so o opposites being thus multiplied to keep each other in chec and he might have added, that those who inhabit places on t frontier are obliged to live and sleep on the watch, on the *vive*, and are willing to preserve the spirit of their position a the privilege of being prepared against all attacks. And seems necessary," continues the historian, "that this kind opposition should continue both for each state and each indi dual; for, speaking as one of the illiterate who ought not p haps by rights to express any opinion of his own, I do not how, without this spur, and this bridle, and this provision punishment by God's providence, the bestiality of the power and, he might have added, perhaps the noble qualities ascetic people, could be sufficiently controlled and kept in order; for neither natural reason, nor understanding, nor love of our neighbour, would prevent us otherwise from do violence to each other, or from pushing to an excess the v virtues which we most esteem †." Now certainly reflections this kind, which seem both grave and reasonable as well as sere are likely to neutralize the pain and melancholy which might oth wise have resulted from the subject of our late discussions. Wi ing to part in merry dispositions even towards the absent, I cr permission to add others now of a similar kind, in order to mol those whom we have been rejecting, and so enable them to rea

* Souvenirs contemporains, i. 401. † Lib. v. c. 1

at least elsewhere a little serenity for themselves if that be possible. Who knows? Perhaps if they do not take them too seriously in exchange for all the darts we have been levelling against their notions, which darts were not at all events envenomed by one drop of malice towards themselves, perhaps they will offer us graciously an olive-branch. I can only say we should be delighted; not of course that we fear attacks, provided we can return the blows; but that it is always better to have clever people for us than against us. I would venture then to repeat, with slight corrections, the remark of an accomplished adversary, and apply it to those whom we have been repelling. We maintain then, without a paradox, to use his words, that at the bottom they ought to be pleased at all that has been uttered, and that they ought to regard it as a benefit conferred upon themselves, and these are my reasons:—those who love to dissent, to contradict, and to protest against something or other, however anxious they may always feel to be thus employed, run a risk sometimes of being in want of food for their particular talent. Let them only have opponents, and they need be no longer uneasy; the opponents will supply them every morning with the half of their ideas. How many times, when your reviewers and journalists are at a loss for a subject, have they fallen on the followers of antiquity? They were fasting those mornings, and so they ate a little catholicity; they were at their wits' end to know what to write about, so they turned on the Romish element, composed an eloquent article, and came off with flying colours at its expense. A general rule, therefore, for all these rejected ones is, to have a polemical dispute which may last their life; then they can have a certain serenity! So that, according to sound tactics, they should never slay us outright or hate us mortally; for they live on us. When Fréron died, Voltaire exclaimed, Fréron is dead!—"sur qui vais-je dauber?" That is why we ought all now to part on somewhat friendly terms. We are for them an inexhaustible source of contradictions and of ovations, which may finish by conferring on them the great triumphs on which, unhappily, they seem at times to have set their hearts*. If all

* St. Beuve, Nouveaux Lundis, i.

this should not answer the purpose of dispelling the clouds fro our common atmosphere, let us give up the task of promotir serenity by words. Other instruments may serve the tu better, and so, by way of satisfying all parties and conciliatir all humours, albeit we did not mention it at the time, let suppose that we have had to-day, as usual, to cure our brains, solemn or a lively air, the best comforter to an unsettled fanc —that we have had, in short, our music near the river, and o purely serene moments, so that, to us pleased with the song, not with the memories arising out of the subject of conversati evening has come; and the roads already lighted—for summ is now on the wane—will lead us back, entertained with a su cession of many little things worth observing, to the city.

CHAPTER XVI.

PETERSHAM—who that only navigates on t river, knows much about it, hid away as is among the woods? And yet, when y have landed, and turned down yon la where the tall elms are casting their sha over it, you will soon find in that village place very friendly and favourable as far regards the purpose we always have in view. What majesti avenues, all leading to the great house that gives to Ham s historical a character! recalling Thomson and Armstrong, an the good Duke and Duchess of Queensbury, Prior's Kitty, wh nursed their friend Gay there when he was ill. Then, wha sweet meadows down to the river! and those sloping lawn which front it on the opposite shore, how beautiful are they! know a bank on that side where you can pass, with those wh like it, a very serene hour. It is fragrant with the hawthor that blooms behind it. Scenes of our school-days, aye, and other days too, how full are you of pensive pleasures! Here, i a great legist and an aged and accomplished baronet, some on

for the first time,—O how solemn they did once seem to one of our present crew!

> "When that he was and a little tiny boy,
> With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,"—

found himself in the presence of men of the old faith. Here, from the translator of the Eleonora of Burgher, and from his own revered master, he had his first acquaintance with literary talk, and being then of years to profit by an example that was thrown away upon the child of a father loving it in a state of society when it was little known and less prized, with toleration. And then, let others at least say, in later times, what tenderness and sweetness in the human form have strayed on summer evenings along this path by the river! What fresh beautiful thoughts! what aspirations moved the heart! Transient, let them be called, though they are still enduring as a remembrance, brief, in one sense, as the lightning, but still realities, perhaps foretastes, at all events, moments not to be forgotten.

Well, here we are again sitting at the oars, preceded by the swans with white wings serving them for sails in order to outspeed us. Well, comrades, we heard a thing or two on our last voyage that might set any one a-thinking; but to-day there will be nothing to raise that fear of an unwholesome atmosphere which was expressed at its termination, and I warrant thee, sweet juvenile, the time shall not go dully by us. I would now say, trusting in the influence of a serene hour,

> "Gentlemen, let your passions breathe awhile,
> A little music may correct the error,
> And you may find yourselves.
> Come on. This minute every cloud is vanish'd
> That did present displeasing forms."

The last day we spent together there were discussions capable of conjuring up ghastly spectral memories of horrible combats, and places sinister contrived through hatred and suspicion. We protested at the time that it was not our fault. As Honorio says in the old play, I am not fond of passing by such spots,

> "———— nor do I wish to see
> Upon your spring another wind than what

> The wings of fragrant western gales do enrich
> The air withal, which, gliding as you walk,
> May kiss the teeming flowers, and with soft breath
> Open the buds to welcome you."

When I think of those companions, or counsellors, and protectors, that are now departed—one of them fled even while I am engaged in preparing these sheets—yes, "there's a great spirit gone!"—when I think of those absent now who would have been so pleased to accompany us, entering upon the subject that must follow the preceding discussion; for, having suggested the dispositions arising from the abuse of truth, and from the error of principles opposed to it, that are to be rejected, we have to speak of those which can be traced to the right use of others that are true,—I feel as if these persons, so dear to memory, and so venerated, were once more present with us, and I can repeat the lines,

> "——— an me ludit amabilis
> Insania? Audire, et videor pios
> Errare per lucos, amœnæ
> Quos et aquæ subeunt et auræ *."

Elsewhere, with others of a different order of mind, we might in self-defence be preparing ourselves again to dispute and contend; for against what will not some men argue? but here, even without alluding to our memory of persons,—here having with us in the boat the youthful spirit, and the loving heart and the humble mind, and so many other qualifications, all radiating from the same luminous centre, and tending to the same gracious end, it seems to me that we ought not to think of combating or contending with any one, but simply of expressing what we feel, and, as the ancient poet says, "telling the argument to the boys, and to the youths, and to the men, and to the oldest men," and, what the pagan does not add, to the girls too, and furthermore (if there chance to be any such amongst us, as intruders will press in sometimes every where) "to those who think themselves ever so much more than men †." Yes, I repeat it, telling it to the girls too; for this would be not

* Hor. iii. 4.

† Peace.

only quite becoming, but in the best and highest sense a most natural proceeding; and the exquisite reason why it should be so considered is not drawn from the whims or idiosyncrasies of any individual, or from any solitary eccentric book developing them, but from what a bard of Ireland told me once, and also from an observation of facts confirming his report; for let all men know by these presents, that in the little sister island, among the simple population, where no voice is heard—or ought to be heard—but that of nature and of faith, the very subject we are going to hear about is introduced into poetical compositions intended for their perusal. You will find it even on the broad sheets of amatory ballads, as in the little pieces entitled, "Discussion between a Boy and Girl near Dundalk," in which the girl has the best of it; and "The Lady's Conversion," where she was the aggressor, the latter beginning with,

"As I roved out one evening down by a pleasant shade,"

and ending with

"This couple they are married, and hope to have success;
Unknown to friends and parents they do one creed profess."

I hope these classical and auspicious lines, that ought to be doubly dear to us, if it be true, as Shakspeare says, that peace breeds them, may be oracular, as favouring our intent. Are we not all consanguineous? Are we not of her blood? Certainly it will be an occasion when we may say without boasting, that if the first hearing of the things to be uttered should move an objection, we are in good hope that a second hearing of them will suggest an answer. Nevertheless, in all sober gravity, knowing what we are ourselves, in such a poverty of grace, and deeply conscious of it, without caring to parade the knowledge, this task itself, in spite of all our boat load, requires caution. For, not to allude to graver reasons, even on the river, and with a party of pleasure, if one cannot hope to serve the cause that one advocates, one must endeavour to avoid what would be disgraceful, compromising and injuring it. Within certain spheres man feels every moment that, as Prince Gargarin said to Madame Swetchine, "he can himself do nothing; and also, what is far worse, that he can spoil every thing." In this instance, with-

out having to play the orator, one must endeavour not only to say what is necessary, but also, when it relates to such grave matters, not to say what is not necessary, still less what is false and exaggerated; for, as a great orator has said, "a bad argument used by a friend does ten times more injury to the cause that he wishes to defend than the best argument employed by its adversaries."

After all, however, (what may encourage us,) "a certain kind of ignorance," as a great author remarks, "is strength;" one can always reckon on it; and it really does avail you, at least in the sense of bidding you proceed, as if there were not others to do the work better.

Cicero, speaking of oratory as comprising every thing, approved of those ancients who affirmed that all things relative to it were but one, and connected together with one force and consent of nature. "For," he added, "there is nothing of this kind which, taken from other things, can stand by itself, or which, if wanting these other things, can retain its power and eternity. But," he continued, "if this opinion be more elevated than can be comprehended by the sense or thought of men, there is that true voice of Plato, that the whole doctrine of these ingenuous branches of knowledge needful for man is bound together by a certain bond of aggregation. For when that force is perceived by which the causes and effects of things are known, there is found to be a certain wondrous consent and harmony of all doctrines. But if this, again, should appear to be something higher than what we, resting on the ground, can behold, yet that, at least, which we adopt, which we profess and receive, we ought to know and maintain." In like manner we may affirm that, in regard to the highest of all the domains of thought comprising all that forms the staple of oratory, there is one serene state of mind to which innumerable things contribute; for, whether we speak of heaven or of earth,—whether of what is divine or of what is human, whether of light or of serious things, whether we would encourage men or deter them, teach them or incite them, whether we are alone or with others, whether with few or with many,—each qualification that has been deemed necessary, if considered separately, is but a river or a streamlet, not the spring-head and fountain; but since we

are oppressed with the opinions not only of the vulgar, but also of men with a slight tincture of learning, who, what they cannot embrace in one view, regard in torn and separated parts, and who, as if the body from the soul, so the whole phenomena of life would disjoin from principles without which the former would be inexplicable, we have endeavoured to investigate things without referring always to their source; though, now following the philosopher, one might say that, when about to be shown the fountains, if we do not quickly recognize them, we shall be in danger of never knowing them, which is an eventuality that no one with a human thirst will feel any great longing to realize in himself.

Here, then, in brief, at the commencement of this day's excursion, our friends would be understood as desiring to have shown that neither serene hours can be enjoyed without aid from this common and divine source of order and conformity to the divine plan, nor any life be happy without at least a willingness to be sustained by the waters which emanate from it,—a theme not in the least out of season on any of our expeditions; for even the ancients at their banquets said with Xenophanes, the Colophonian, that they wanted for such occasions the man

> "Who lays down rules, and tells fine tales of virtue;
> Not raking up the old Titanic fables,
> Wars of the giants, or the Lapithæ,
> Figments of ancient times, mere pleasing trifles,
> Full of no solid good; but always speaking
> Things that may lead to right ideas of God *."

Although the Thames is not the Nile, and we cannot expect any day to see on the horizon paddling down towards us a Saint Pachomius, as when the old hermit used to row his boat up and down the river in order to visit his different communities, we may fall in upon its waters with some of these wanderers, who, even on the London river, can throw in a grave and a happy word at times without spoiling any conversation,—a word which will leave an impression on the minds of those who hear

* Athen. xi.

it that is not easily effaced from the memory. Well, supposing ourselves thus fortunate, let us disembark, or rather row towards that cluster of rushes where our boat will remain stationary, and so proceed with the discussion, or whatever else you are pleased to call it, though indeed, to speak strictly, it will be in some sort, by anticipation, only an epilogue, to make plain what was at times an obscure precedence.

We may remark, then, at first, that in general a sense of the necessity of having one definite supreme object, to which, however distant, all things are viewed in some degree or other as referable, belongs to human nature; and the line

"——— certum voto pete finem"

can attest it. "The ancients," as M. de Sacy observes, "gave for foundation to their systems of policy and manners the great question of the sovereign good, and," as he adds, "they did so rightly; for nations and individuals must first know what is the object of life. If you do not begin by solving this problem you can neither," as he says, "conduct yourself, nor appreciate the conduct of others." Nothing sickens more the heart, even of slight, impulsive, and would-be merry people, than a clever and practical outrage of order in this respect, when they see as in these times, substituted for a primal and ultimate object some passing shadow of good, as every thing exclusively earthly must be designated, whether it be national greatness, the progress of science attested by physical triumphs, success in life, or even the play of amiable affections centred in their subjects within worshipful society. When you call our people, that entertain views so different from those of the public now, unpatriotic, ignorant, thoughtless, imaginative, inconsiderate, or perhaps passion's slaves, that is their answer. England, progress, and much that you applaud they love; and for that England's sake, as well as in the interest of that general progress and of their own, they make that straight confession.

That man requires for his peace the having an ultimate supreme object beyond earthly happiness, which must soon end with life,—beyond political freedom, which involves of itself no great good if not well employed,—is implied in the poet's lines,

"Est aliquid quo tendis, et in quod dirigis arcum?
An passim sequeris corvos testaque lutoque,
Securus quo pes ferat, atque ex tempore vivis*."

"Petite hinc juvenesque senesque
Finem animo certum, miserisque viatica canis†."

The emperor Marcus Antoninus remarks, that many men act a life laborious about trifles, while having no final end or object in view, in accordance with which their endeavours and thoughts are directed‡; and what that end or object ought to be he signifies plainly enough, making it consist in that which is ultimate with Christians; for he says, "To dust thou must return, and not even a name will remain to thee, while all earthly good will prove to be vanity,—but faith, modesty, justice, and truth, would transfer thee from earth to heaven§." There are times, of course, when, like painters of a certain school, we are content with seeing a bank of beautiful flowers, or a cavern fringed with fern, or a garden with fruit-trees trained up walls; but there are other moments when we feel that a landscape requires distance, a background, an horizon in which earth and heaven seem to meet. When you are for letting your mind expatiate, you must give up the plays and pastime that only suit the Elysian fields of Virgil. You want space, you want infinity, or at least what represents it. Therefore you want a glimpse of sky; and there is no enjoying even the things close to you if you did not feel that you could behold that sky when you liked. There is in like manner no pure satisfaction from any thing in life, perhaps even no genuine mirth, unless you habitually, though perhaps at the moment quite unconsciously, view it in reference to better times, which can only be realized in a future state of existence.

"Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live."

But all earthly objects pass. Work must therefore have an ultimate end beyond the present life. It is the impossibility in which we are placed to be satisfied with the present that causes

* Pers. iii.
† Ibid. v.
‡ Lib. ii.
§ Lib. v.

what Sir William Temple calls the thorn ever growing with the rose,—namely, a certain restlessness of mind and thought which seems universally and inseparably annexed to our very natures, unsatisfied with what we are, or what we at the moment possess and enjoy, giving rise to both private and public dissatisfaction, and thereby consummating, as he thinks, the particular and general infelicity of mankind. He adds, that this restless humour is even a weed that seems to thrive most and grow fastest in the best soils *. We are all of us in this world like Napoleon in the island of Elba. It was a wonderful thing to see him there at first trying to make the most of it, as of an empire in miniature; but at the end of a few months there was nothing more for him to do in it, and leave it he must, or else die of weariness. Above all, there is no enjoying any thing thoroughly if there lurks within you even a mere instinctive sense that you may be intellectually preparing some sinister result for yourself hereafter, and wantonly, through mental pride or an aversion for what is opposed to it, through aptitude for scornful impressions, or through mere inertia disliking to use either your understanding or your heart, rejecting a good which Heaven proffers to the human race. How many remarkable examples to prove these propositions might be cited from modern times! Not to speak of wanting the instinctive sense of needing and meeting with mercy which attends mental opposition, what ravages are discernible in greatest intelligences, deprived of this unity of direction and sentiment, from the weariness that comes over them of all things! This "tædium vitæ" is of all human maladies the most incurable,—this absence of a future object, of all hope,—this bounded horizon, beyond which one sees neither passion nor happiness,—there is no depth of wretchedness more horrible than that! many poets and heroes have died of it. The fact is, as a French critic, probably without having read Butler, remarks, that there is no sentiment more natural, more popular, more rational, and more irreproachable than that on which reposes what may be called simple mysticism, as distinguished from the systematic. For most people this gives rise to rapid intermittants, flashes of divine

* Miscel. p. 111.

nostalgy, which cause them to catch glimpses, through space and darkness, of the distant images of their lost country. This mysticism is but a legitimate revolt of mind against matter,—a sudden protest of the noblest part of ourselves against the lowest, a precious remnant of the inheritance destroyed by the original fault,—a letter of audience granted by the Creator to the creature, to enable him to approach the divine presence, to rise from his misery, and to remind him that their separation is not to be eternal. These transitions belong essentially to all that can be combined with serenity. All who would taste a serene hour must be liable to experience them, though it were only for an hour, a minute, a second, for the instant that an arrow employs to attain the mark, and the soul to reach God. No serenity possible where there has been no elevations of this kind, no memory of these sublime shudderings, of these precious aspirations, of these sudden victories of the immaterial being *. But there is reason to feel assured that it is the merriest, fairest, and most engaging of our company, to whom they are most familiar. Therefore, in brief, one who only seeks serene hours must in some sort retain religion in regard to the lightest things, to keep them, what they are intended to be, light as a feather; for, otherwise, once snap the cord which is to prevent an eternal separation, and the gossamer will feel like lead, to weigh and sink him and his spirits down below the dust. "Oh, what a good thing is rest!" exclaims a great contemplatist, "when this rest is really and truly peace." But without the bond just spoken of, there can be no rest that involves any degree of peace to speak of. A grave element, an unbending principle, therefore enters of necessity into our enjoyments, in the same way as iron, by giving colour to the blood, is made to conduce to the loveliness of the human countenance, of which Ruskin so beautifully says, "Is it not strange to find this stern and strong metal mingled so delicately in our human life, that we cannot even blush without its help?" The fear of being thought too grave and serious must not induce us then to cut the strings of the lyre. There are never too many strings to the lyre when it is properly played on. Besides, one might

* Pontmartin, Causeries littéraires.

multiply applications, and show you that it is as easy to convert terminology which discourages and frightens you into your ow habitual language, as it would be (to use the simile of a Chri tian philosopher) to change the new metre measures into the ol popular measures. We must not, besides, mistake what is grav for what is heavy and unwholesome. "Gravity," says th most "chatty" of writers, "cannot help being at the bottom c all our best feelings, whether they look grave or not in the face and, whenever it has to do with an affectionate feeling, canno but bring a certain pleasure with it*." The fact is, that with out such a religious element to some extent or other, existing i it were in solution with every thing, there is a certainty that a the sweetness, and kindness, and humanity, that are so muc prized, will sooner or later turn to what we ourselves shall thin a mass of corruption, proving to none more offensive and loath some than to those very persons of keen sensitive natures wi think that they only love what is sweet, and only recoil fro what is severe. Judging from the memorable passage at th commencement of Cicero's De Natura Deorum †, in which h considers the very existence of human society as involved in th danger, antiquity must have been impressed with a very pro found sense of this fact. Indeed, to witness remarkable pro we have only to read the fable respecting what caused the d struction of the Sybarites. The oracle, in reply to their deman had promised a duration of their power so long as their respe for heaven did not yield to their respect for men. They thoug themselves consequently secure for ever; but a Sybarite, havi pursued one of his slaves into a temple, where he fell upon hi and the poor wretch flying then to the tomb of his master father, the Sybarite was moved to spare him. No one thoug any thing of this but Thamyris, who remembering the orac and reflecting on this event, sold his possessions and left S baris. It was said in consequence that he had lost his sense but the result proved his wisdom, and verified the oracular pr diction ‡. In this narrative you have the sentiments of Cice and of the whole of the ancient world, historically, as it we

* Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, i. 212. † Lib. i. 2.

‡ Blanchard, Sur les Sybarites, Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscr. xiii.

expressed; and certainly every deep observer, let the age he lives in be what it may, will admit the truth on which they rested. Accordingly, all your great thorough-going humanists, like Shakspeare, have done equal justice, as a critic observes, "to the gravest and the gayest moments of life." In fact, every true man, young or old, ought to resemble in this respect that great Constable of France, Anne de Montmorency, of whom Brantome says, "Bref, ce seigneur estoit en tout universel, tant en choses sérieuses, que joyeuses*." The old Greek poet expressly indeed says, that "if they care for what is immortal, mortals find advantage in it even while mortal;" so that actually in this lowest sense, as he adds of something else, "religion has yet another name—the Useful." "Our prudence, without this principle," says Balzac, coming to the same conclusion, "is short-sighted. The religious prudence, which sacrifices nothing genuine, has a wider range; for, proposing to itself the supreme felicity, and embracing in its extent those future ages that the Gospel reveals, in comparison with which those of history are but instants, it works for heaven and for eternity, for the noblest kingdom and the longest reign." Take away the sense of this supreme object, and you feel, wherever you may be, and let what delights one can conceive surround you, that there is something of supreme importance wanting, as even the old poet himself says,

"—— Deest aliquid summæ."

Take away that sense, and with what heart will you hear those words of our rude though intensely pathetic song?—

"Oh, weep no more for thy Annie,
Nor bend at eve near her tomb,
Far away from the shores of affliction,
Far away from this wilderness of gloom,
In the land of delight thou shalt behold her,
There shalt list to her dulcet voice again;
Where the flowers which bloom never wither,
And the joy of the bosom doth remain."

* Tom. iv. 145.

This sense, of course, may exist along with much internal that is to be deplored. It is not necessary to be a saint to feel it. But so far any one without hypocrisy, at least in the common sense of the word, may stand up for it. "Unless I am deceived," says Richard of St. Victor, "what takes place in my heart takes place in yours *." He then, at least, would not disdain such testimony; and, after all, in regard to the wants, as well as to the sins of common mortals, perhaps, unless we take very exceptional cases, "each might speak for all." And there is nothing in this conformity to grieve the wisest or the best. For, perhaps, though it is not we who should say it, "it is better we be all made such, than any one of us be monster'd worse."

"It is difficult," says Cicero, "to say what may be the cause why from those things which greatly impress our senses with pleasure, and move them most at the first aspect, we should be alienated most quickly with a certain weariness and satiety. We see this in all the arts in which, if sweetness alone were studied or indulged in too long, not alone the austere, but the multitude itself would cry out. 'Sic omnibus in rebus voluptatibus maximis fastidium finitimum est †.'" After this observation, so well justified by every one's own experience, which must verify the friar's words, that "the sweet honey is loathsome in his own deliciousness," we shall wonder the less why such grave considerations as we are about to propose should be thought to have a place naturally marked out for them amidst the serenity of an interval of leisure and pastime. We shall better understand how it is that, with that disposition for fun and laughter into which we suppose our ramblers gone out for the day to enter with all their heart, they should have such a store of wise saws, as, for instance, "that too much of this salt is worse than none at all," and that "this too much is not far from little,"—how it is that, like the Mortemarts, as described by the Duc de Saint-Simon, they can be amiable, amusing, gay, and serious all at the same time ‡,—how it is that every one of them, as well

* De Judicio universali. † De Oratore, iii. 25.

‡ i. 406.

as the wise man, needs, as Balzac says, "the consolations of theology,"—why we should all desire to refresh our minds, fatigued with affairs, or with the recreation that is to relieve us after them, in listening to the casual remark or suggestion that can be traced to a former conversation held by some man of God, from whom were received the counsels which we have either already anticipated by our actions, or verified by the experience of what results from contravening them. "In vain," says M. de Sacy, "would a modern writer," and he might even add excursionist, "wish to escape from controversy; it dominates or comes across him in spite of himself." "See! I have not been able to avoid my theology at last!" writes a celebrated humourist. You may hear the same confession any day from a girl or a boy, and each of them among the merriest and most natural of your boat's company. It is not alone that subjects the most diverse in philosophy and in literature, as in life, have still their tangents; it is that we are in pensive and enthusiastically happy moments recalled to a sense of the importance of such considerations,—the very river itself proclaiming it, as, indeed, the poet Denham intimates in the lines on Cooper's Hill, where he speaks of the Thames

> "Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,
> Like mortal life to meet eternity."

It is that we hear, like Parnell, Contentment's voice addressing us in the words,

> "Know God, and bring thy heart to know
> The joys which from religion flow;
> Then ev'ry grace shall prove its guest,
> And I'll be there to crown the rest."

It is, as Orlando, without mincing matters, says to Agrican, "that the man who is without a knowledge of his Maker, and of his will, is no better than a stock, or a stone, or a brute beast;" and, consequently, such knowledge is felt to be necessary for the enjoyment of serene hours. And, in point of fact, accordingly, how many persons, without knowing it, resemble St. Augustin in his youth in this respect, that they have at the

bottom of their hearts the name of the Saviour so profoundly written, that without that name appearing in it, or at least implied, neither a conversation nor a book, however learned or eloquent, can wholly delight or captivate them? The object proposed in all these excursions in reality requires this. "Omnia namque," as the book of the Imitation says, addressing our Lord, "quæ ad pacem videntur esse et felicitatem habendam, te absente nihil sunt, nihilque felicitatis in veritate conferunt." "Doctrines, therefore," as De Sacy concludes, "play too important a part to be ignored by any one*;" and it is not necessary to be a young man singularly endowed, or a girl of intelligence beyond what is ordinary, to arrive with him at the same inference. Moreover, these intervals of enjoyment require that there should be a certain alternation of the playful and the grave, such as, in point of fact, we find characterizing them at all times, as, for instance, in the days when people in England, even amidst frolic, used to say to one another, as the lower orders still do, "Remember that green grass must turn to dry hay;" or, "Look you never so high, your head must lie level with your feet;" or as in France, when Voiture, who used to be merry on serious subjects, was said to form the mirthful side of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, while Corneille was the representative of its severer hours†. Certainly, while rowing, or swimming, or cricketing, or riding, or frolicking, or "dancing in the chequered shade," one needs no allusion to such subjects; no one here is so silly as to suppose it; but the play over, and an hour come for rest and for breathing, sitting in the summer-house in the honeysuckle bower near the river, or stretched upon the grass beneath the willow with some one you like, you will soon find, at the least thing casually passing, that this necessity exists, that the tangent remains, that the cord has not been snapt for the most careless amongst the late laughing lively troop, as well as for the most thoughtful philosopher that only pondered and looked on. "You used to say to me formerly," writes a celebrated French beauty to her friend, "that

* Variétés littéraires.

† Cousin, Mde. de Longueville.

I should die at last by dint of reflecting overmuch. Well, now that I am growing old, I try to think no more." So, while able to go forth for pleasure, there was even what seemed, however neutralized at the moment, an excess of reflection; and in point of fact, accordingly, as a great observer has lately remarked, "at the bottom, the instinct of truth, which belongs to the sound part of the humanity of our epoch, that aspiration towards what is good which does not surpass the level of natural qualities, yearns after the sublime precepts brought by Christianity to the world, and cannot be appeased until it has found them, or at least made them the subject of its dreams*."

But let us observe, without further delay, what it is in regard to this foundation of felicity, and in order to achieve the object of all these excursions, that is necessary here,—what may be termed the common focus of all the qualities hitherto required, the great reservoir on high, from which, as from a hill, they flow to us. Arrived at this point, let us frankly proclaim our conviction, which we have had in fact from the beginning, never losing sight of our obligation to keep on consistently in an undeviating line, aiming at what it unfolds, that this is neither more nor less than a filial, juvenile, childlike, popular, or, even if you will, vulgar acquiescence in the ancient principles of organized Christianity; or, in order to speak with the moderation of truth, it is at least that state of the heart and mind which approaches the nearest to them, and to which they are the most accessible.

In the first place, I think it is obvious that one requires a person of natural sense and honesty, who can read broad, prominent, and one might add vulgar, facts, and not distort or refine them away into a subtle ether, or swear against objects, putting armour on his ears and on his eyes, after the manner of a Sophist, or of one whose discernings are lethargied waking, to suit sheer indolence, or to further some material, selfish, or vicious interest, or in order to support some reckless whim and fancy of his own. What is required is one who loves truth and natural honesty,—for we ought to call things by their right

* Madame Swetchine, Lettres, ii. 368.

name,—who has a taste for facts and an intelligence to receive them,—who does not resist what he sees and knows, but who surrenders himself to what he sees, without exaggeration and without boasting. Some persons, one must admit hopefully, are so stunned by the noises of contending sections, that for them to see plainly any thing that these sects are pleased to dispute about in their hearing, in their then consequent state of intellectual complication, is wholly out of the question. This for them may be providential. But there are others who, though left to silence and solitude, with learning and talents to profit by them, deserve the blame which Garat said some of his own relations merited, "they are not liars, but they have this one defect, that they can never see things as they are." Indeed, strange to say, it is of this very Garat himself that a recent critic, without appearing to remember the remark, says, "Jamais homme peut-être ne poussa plus loin la faculté de ne pas voir les choses comme elles sont." In this respect, however, it is difficult to carry off the palm from many in England,—where, as poor Marguerite de Valois said of France in her time, "certain predispositions fascinate eyes, and prevent them from ever being able to see things as they are*." Yet perhaps even these persons have been mystified by false reports previously. It was a sensible saying of Louis XIV., that "a man who is ill informed can never avoid reasoning ill;" and as M. Sainte-Beuve remarks, "it was a profound conclusion when he added, 'I believe that whoever was well informed and well convinced of all that really is, would never do but what he ought.'" Here is an instance; for truly to the Church one may always address the words, "Who loves thee not, understandeth thee not." He doth but mistake the truth totally. There is a third class of persons, however, who seem on purpose,—for utter recklessness may involve a sort of previous general design,—and wantonly to get wrong respecting facts, albeit so clear, so shining, and so evident, that they will glimmer through a blind man's eye. It is chiefly with those in the intermediate state that we are now concerned. They meet us every where; and without being great philosophers, they exemplify what has been said of Hegel,

* Mém. ad an. 1581.

who "inquires after facts with a solicitude that seems sincere; but these facts he transforms in an instant, explains them after his fashion, and gives them the signification that pleases him. He is never able to relate one of them in its nakedness; never does he give a simple narrative. As the artist works on brute matter, and forces it to represent his idea, so does Hegel mould the data of experience and of history, throws aside all that does not agree with him, and forces the rest to become only the envelope of his own thought*." With such philosophers nothing that is so, is so; though, as the old hermit of Prague, that never saw pen and ink, very wittily said to a niece of king Gorbodac, "That that is, is." Nevertheless, something like this is the way that certain people dispose of facts that belong to both common life and to the sphere of philosophy; for without even quitting the former domains, the existence and wonderful prerogatives of the Christian Church, that "matrem omnium bene factorum beneque dictorum,"—for assuredly this epithet belongs to her rather than to philosophy, which Cicero so qualifies,—constitute a fact which ought neither to be unobserved nor transformed in this way by any one, whether a philosopher or a common mortal, who desires this profound interior peace that the divinely constituted fountain on an eminence is intended to supply, through rivulets and channels, whether visible or unseen, and which we designate by speaking of serene hours. For only take a glance at those facts. "Oh!" exclaims Balzac,—no theologian, mind, but the philosopher, the man of letters, and of secular erudition, regarding only facts that address themselves to the observation of all the world,—"how little some people know of the antiquity of the one fold! Compared with it every thing is modern. The fabulous and the heroic ages, the wars of Thebes and of Troy, the affairs of the Assyrians and Medes, are in regard to it but of yesterday and to-day. The world was made only to lodge it; and when there were but two persons on the earth, there was already a Church and the Faithful." "The Church," he continues, "has lasted from the beginning of the world. It has survived all its persecutors. It has seen the rise and fall of four great monarchies;

* Ernest Grégoire, Le Correspondant.

from one people, raised up for the good of all, it has visibly passed to all nations; and the same that was a slave in Egypt, a wanderer in the desert, a stranger in Palestine, a prisoner in Babylon, now reigns to-day at Rome. The Lamb was slain from the beginning of the world. The first Adam hoped for the Second, and was consoled by that hope for the loss of his innocence. Abraham saw the day of Christ, and was glad twenty-four ages before his coming. Isaac saw his day, after the loss of his eyes and taking Jacob for Esau. Moses was a Christian. Isaiah prayed the clouds to rain down the Saviour, and the other prophets seemed even to complain of the delay in his coming. Whatever your guides may say," he adds, addressing certain dissidents, "there has always been a bond between earth and heaven. Why wish to break the communication between the two Churches, that which combats and that which triumphs?" A modern historian, in speaking of the religion which Bonaparte had not to invent, but only to defend as he found it existing in 1800, while thinking that its restoration would afford the best security for the glory of his own reign and the happiness of his country, evinces equal discernment in its regard; for he speaks "of that pure belief and that ancient morality which constituted the old religion of Christ, commentated on during eighteen centuries by councils, vast assemblies of the most eminent minds of each epoch, discussing, under the title of heresies, all systems of philosophy, adopting on each of the great problems of the human destiny, to speak in a human way, the opinions that are most plausible, the most social,—adopting them, so to say, by the majority of the human race, producing that body of invariable doctrines which form Christian unity, at the feet of which Bossuet and Leibnitz, after having weighed the wisdom of all the philosophers, came to submit their lofty genius *."

Now, from the first there ought to be no disguise; indeed, the utmost candour is a "sine qua non" on all occasions of choosing proper companions for the sort of thing we are engaged with. In this inquiry respecting what is required for the enjoyment of serene hours, whatever else we may be ourselves, we are not pagans addressing pagans, or supposing possible that any one

* Thiers, Hist. du Consulat. liv. xii.

now can find himself in their position. What man in his senses would wish that he could? The ancients, indeed, had good eyes; but they travelled by night, and the subtilty of their vision was not comparable to the purity of our light. "Some suppose," continues Balzac, "for the love of Chancellor Bacon, that all the follies of the ancients were wise, and all their dreams mysterious; but my goodness does not go so far. I have not sufficient faith to suppose that all ancient errors are reasonable, and regular, and mysterious. If one makes this opening, it will be easy to justify all bad things, since all faults will be figures. On such a road one can go a great distance, and prove that Adam said the penitential Psalms every morning, and that the angel of the Annunciation found Mary finishing her little office of our Lady.

"No; whether we be wise or foolish, fast or slow, that world exists no longer. The great Pan is dead by the birth of the Son of God; one ought not to try to bring him back to life, like him who died exclaiming, 'Galilean, thou hast conquered!' At the rising of this light all the phantoms of paganism have fled away. One ought not to dream of recalling them. A change of style must accompany a renewal of minds. Buchanan writes at times as if addressing a priest of Greece. Nearly all our moderns have taken some false steps in this direction; they have nearly all fallen into this Styx and Acheron, and have gone to the other world for an occasion to commit faults. We may procure stuffs from the Levant, but not get ourselves initiated or set apart for its mysteries."

It is impossible, logically and in accordance with what history and erudition demonstrate, to disprove the justice of these words of Balzac. The clever English writers, who in their leading articles give themselves the airs of being superior to Christianity and all religious denominations as they call them, though in a divine sense dangerous, are in a human light merely contemptible. They have only airs, and nothing else, with all their fine phrases about fates, and destinies, and such odd sayings,—the sisters three, as Launcelot says,—and such branches of learning. And besides, to repeat the remark of Pontmartin, when speaking of the attempt of Julian to recall paganism, as related by the prince Albert de Broglie:—"If the

divine truth of Christianity manifests itself no longer by the miraculous force of preaching and proselytism, by the inexhaustible fecundity of the circus and the scaffold, by the official victory of the Labarum on the imperial eagles, and by the connivance of the Cæsars, it is shown in a manner still more definitive by the supreme evidence, that all which is not Christianity is dead, and can be brought to life no more, however the will, the affected conviction, the virtue and the genius of men, and those men masters of the world, leaders of "public opinion," in countries without faith,—or, as in the case of Julian, emperors should combine to resuscitate it*. It remains, then, for us to observe what dispositions, in accordance with the exigencies of the light given to the world in Christian times, are required, even if it were only in order to secure the kind of enjoyment arising out of a certain interior sense of at least mental consistency, which we are now concerned with.

The first quality required for the attainment of that peace, of that serene quietude after which every intelligence sighs, is certainly faith, which the Church on Holy Saturday invokes in the words of her prayer that the whole world may pass to the Israelitic dignity, and into children of Abraham. As Topffer, the author of the celebrated Zigzag Excursions, a book for holidays, from which I therefore more willingly cite words, says in one of them, "What is wanted is not so much to believe in one's self, to admit or qualify such and such theologic doctrines, to understand in this sense or that a dogma or a passage, as it is to subject one's soul wholly, whether ignorant or learned, intelligent or simple, to the Word from on high, not always comprehended, but always to be adored." Obviously indeed, for a day's serene pleasure, as well as for the prosperity of that other zigzag voyage which consists in a life-long study of truth, the mind must be in repose. As Leibnitz says, this state of mind is that which constitutes felicity; consequently, man must have for his grand ultimate idea heaven, as the asylum where he will find unbroken and unveiled rest and truth; in other words, he must have faith. Now why should not every one have faith? What is more cordial? more in accordance with common sense,

* Causeries du Samedi.

more consonant with the highest philosophy itself? Why should there be things which, as some one says, are only questioned and doubted in the cabinet, and which are believed in and acted upon as soon as one crosses one's threshold, in the field or in the street, in spite of the scruples of reason when it has not acquired the demonstrative proof of them? Why should not every one admit at once with the Angel of the school that there are two classes of truths, "una ad quam rationis inquisitio pertingere potest, altera quæ omne ingenium humanæ rationis excedit*." Why should not every one feel with the great chancellor D'Aguesseau, that on many points it is more difficult not to believe than to believe†. Of course, faith is in one sense a gift,—a gift, too, recommended by common sense. Philosophically, as well as theologically speaking, that is clear. Experiment, the observation of people in daily life, show that it is; and no doubt, as Vauvenargues remarks, there are truths which are only known by the heart, or, as he might have added, by a docility to the teaching of that original mind which is self-existent; all other minds whatsoever partaking of one original mind, and being, as it were, stamped with the impression or signature of one and the same seal. Whence it cometh to pass, as Cudworth observes, that all minds in the several places and ages of the world, have some ideas or notions of things exactly alike, and truths indivisibly the same,—truths being not multiplied by the diversity of minds that apprehend them; because they are all, and those of faith assuredly are not exceptions, but ectypal participations of one and the same original or archtypal mind and truth; therefore, it is not unreasonable to desire and to believe that every one should and can have faith. True, as a great statesman remarks in a recent work ‡, "the mind of man is more easily seduced, and is more egotistical than his heart." But where is the necessity for him to neglect the inspirations of the heart common to all his race, in order to follow, uncontrolled by them, the isolated result of his own reasoning powers, which, without the former, in relation to matters of life, can never be of themselves secure? This is an unnatural resolution, contrary

* Cont. Gentes, cap. iv. † Lettres Philosophiques, viii.
‡ Guizot, Méditations sur l'Essence de la Religion chrétienne.

to reason itself, for him to form; and it must at least in the beginning require an effort of his will to arrive at it. Besides, why should any man of common or of extraordinary intelligence seek to substitute the ideal for the supernatural? Why should any one wish to construct a religion of mere sentiment, supposed to be Catholic from its rejecting nothing, on the ruins of that faith which is the best guardian of sentiment, and the focus of all the truths that even philosophy itself wishes to have believed? that," concludes our author, "is to do too much or too little. The human soul will not be satisfied with what you leave to it; neither will human pride acquiesce in regard to what you reject, nor, in brief and in reality, until you have dethroned God." Indeed, "it seems," says Richard of St. Victor, "to be a kind of madness to doubt of the things which we hold by faith, so divinely revealed and confirmed*." We may say of them in the words of Cicero, "cave quidquam putes esse verius." Above reason unquestionably they are; but common sense speaks by the mouth of the same Richard, saying, "Let a man learn to know his own in visible things before he presumes to comprehend God's invisible things†." As the Chancellor D'Aguesseau remarks, "it is not alone in regard to God's foreknowledge and the liberty of man, that reason, like religion, has its mysteries. There are instances, in matters which seem immediately under that control of evidence, which constitutes the seat of its empire. The incommensurability of the diagonal with the side of the square, and all the other examples of this kind, evince a combat of two contradictory truths, both evident and capable of demonstration when viewed separately, and yet both absolutely irreconcilable when you attempt to make them agree. Why, then, should we not follow the same rule in regard to the mysteries of religion which we observe in these cases, when confronted with the difficulties that stop us in matters constituting the very object of reason?—which rule is simply to pronounce only on what we know, and to suspend our judgment in regard to that of which we are ignorant‡." Our German ancestors, according to Tacitus,

* De Trinitate, lib. i. c. 2. † Benjamin Minor, cap. lxxi.
‡ Lett. Phil. 37.

were therefore so far worthy of imitation, inasmuch as with respect to divine things, they thought it better to adore than to scrutinize,—"sanctiusque ac reverentius visum credere quam scire." Truly that is what we all should do if we wish to be rational; and that, too, even if it be a question of what is called a miracle; for to a sharp and penetrating intelligence, "nothing," as a living author says, "appears more natural than the supernatural." This disposition keeps men walking peaceably on what an old author styles "la voie battue et droiturière," the old beaten high road followed by the people, by youth and age, by women, and by those who come nearest to imitate these heroic and charming virtues,—the road therefore common to all who choose to use it, and which is never left for another, however lonesome and lofty, without having to bid adieu to serenity, and to many other things of more importance still. Therefore a celebrated French author* of our times, though rather given to a vague philosophy, has never ceased, as he says himself, endeavouring with every tone, from that of raillery to that of affection, to keep the youth of his country constant to it. "Don't think yourselves, by losing your faith, to be superior to others," he says; "accept common life; don't disdain common virtues; no others are good. Love the high roads. Far be it from me to malign them: I adore them†." But you will say, perhaps, that in every region of the world, all who follow a national religion, however false, can talk in this way, and allege reasons for not consorting with those who would direct them on a different track. This is the objection of men who travel to the East, or read travels without the Catholic clue,—your would-be-knowing fellows, who keep thinking about respectable Mussulmen, pious Buddists, and who, if they do not find in the gorilla, their latest discovery, the origin of man, are free to confess that, in their eyes, a Brahmin is quite on a par with an archbishop. But no, my profound thinker of the nineteenth century, for all your travels, and reading, and experience, there is a difference which separates these human superstitions, and those who are victimized by them, from the Christian people and from divine

* Saint-Marc Girardin.

† Saint-Beuve, Causeries du Lundi, tome i.

faith; and the difference, which is clear and broad, is quite sufficient to destroy the force of your argument,—though, as this is not the place for such discussions, we must refer you for proof of our assertion to the annals of the propagation of the faith, to the reports from Central Africa of our own Geographical Society, and to the works of Christian philosophers, who knew the east ten times better than you do for all your voyages and travels. An old English writer lamented in his day, and in no very measured terms either, "a falling off from those schemes of thinking, which conduce to the happiness and perfection of human nature. This evil comes upon us," he says, "from the works of a few solemn blockheads, that meet together with the zeal and seriousness of apostles, to extirpate common sense and propagate infidelity. These are wretches," he adds, with the same premeditated indignation, "who publish their crude conceptions with an ambition of appearing more wise than the rest of mankind, upon no other pretence than that of dissenting from them." Those were the times in England when it was thought the genteel thing to pity any one who had the least sentiment of religion, saying of him as in the play, "his worst fault is that he is given to prayer, he is something peevish that way; but nobody but has his fault;" or elsewhere in Revenge's tragedy,

> "We could not woo him once to pray,
> He show'd himself a gentleman in that: give him his due."

Of which temper remarkable traces can be found in the gravest pages of Butler, who is obliged to apologize to it when treating on the love of God. To this state of public opinion Dryden too refers in the lines of the epilogue to Tyrannic Love,

> "A play which if you dare but twice sit out,
> You'll all be slander'd, and be thought devout."

Cowley seems to grow very warm when it is your literary-talking, scientific people that produce these results. He exclaims with anger,

> "A curse on all your vain philosophies,
> Which on weak nature's law depend,
> And know not how to comprehend
> Love and religion, those great mysteries."

It must be acknowledged, too, that the deep and acute writers of the seventeenth century were in general, and with few exceptions, not more disposed to moderate their style, through tenderness and respect for willing unbelievers as a class. How Johnson used to speak of them we all know. "I never yet," says another, whose keen eyes could at least detect their shallowness, "saw so poor an atheistical scribble, which would not serve as a twig for sinking libertines to catch at. It must be allowed in their behalf that the faith of Christians is but as a grain of mustard-seed in comparison of theirs, which can remove such mountains of absurdities, and submit with so entire a resignation to such apostles. If these men had any share of that reason they pretend to, they would retire into Christianity, merely to give it ease. The free-thinkers may talk what they please of pedantry, and cant, and jargon of schoolmen, and insignificant terms, if even the most perplexed and perplexing follower of Aristotle, from Scotus to Suarez, could be a match for themselves*." Certainly it is not to their writings you should go to find what is not undiscoverable even among the latter—pages fresh running, clear, with words that are subtle, guarded, eminently spiritual, bordering closely upon thought, and capable of equaling its rapidity. Later, when the contagion reached France, we have observations of the same kind by those who observed it. "In physics," said Rivarol, "they have only found objections against the Author of nature;" and what objections! They speak of forces; but, as Lacordaire demands, beyond forces are there not laws? We see that the cause acts according to a determined rule, that it is governed by another force, which is the law. So, for instance, they think it enough to say that by gravitation bodies are drawn in an inverse ratio with the square of the distances. But why is it so? How comes a force to have behind it another force, which maintains it in a circle from which it cannot escape? What is a force which is added to another force, as a wheel conjoined with a wheel?" Then again, as Rivarol resumes, "These same rationalists found in metaphysics only doubt and subtleties; morals and logic have

* Swift.

only furnished them with declamations against political order, religion, and the laws of property. They aspired to nothing short of the reconstruction of every thing by revolt against every thing; and the only results they produce are dissolution and decomposition. While religion speaks to the heart, taking us by the sensitive and vast side, which is nearly the same in all individuals, this philosophy addresses itself to the side which is bounded, unequal, and deceptive. Accordingly, wherever religion and barbarism coexist, it is religion that triumphs; but wherever there is a mixture of barbarism and philosophy, it is barbarism that carries the day." And no wonder; for as Athenæus himself asked, "What should we get by the theories of philosophers? What do we get even by such an immortality as they suggest or promise to us?" Another who knows them well, and one who neither sees things nor writes about them under the influence of any ultracism, unless joviality and good humour can be so qualified, does not treat them with more tenderness. "Here you find yourself," he says, "in the secret cabinet of philosophy, whose spiced discourses and savoury sauces have overthrown the ancient Christian world. Here pepper and paradox, atheism and luxury, gluttony and negation have accomplished their most rare and succulent master-pieces; here a set of fellows full of doubt and eloquence, starved at the bottom and turbulent in form, with dark thoughts, across which the lightning of style casts gleams that dazzle you, have founded, hatched, and nourished the greatest fencers with irony that mankind ever saw. In these haunts of declamation and of Epicurism, there is not a bottle or a plate that does not savour of the argumentative subtleties of the rising sect. They will tell you by what delusions, periphrases, double senses, persecutions, and orgies, philosophy has grown up and become intoxicated with hope and pride. Through this gate which opens to old adepts you enter its stronghold and its Louvre. Old men, for the most part with souls and minds long given to the four winds of heaven, with a ceaseless eloquence talking for ever, at once venturesome, proud, indifferent, scornful, sober, and intemperate, gloomy and gay, each of them is an oracle, a passion, a litter of lies and truths, a collector of clouds, a light full of

darkness, knowing the catechism of all ages, the grammar of all trades, the A B C of all professions, a diviner, a prophet, one seated on the tripod, agitating all consciences, and turning all heads. Ah! a day will come," he continues, addressing them, "when language which has been your life will be your death, and after living by your head alone, when that forehead will be filled with trouble and murmurs, though you are noise more than thought, movement rather than action; for having thought too much, thought in its turn will stop with you altogether. You will see only phantoms, hear only words of horror. Poesy and poets will cover themselves with a veil, and leave you in darkness; for you the sweetest songs will lose their harmony, the best epigrams their point; you will hardly be able to distinguish a friend; and disappearing suddenly like a bark in the tempest, the master orator, the precursor of so many revolutions will be henceforth no more than a great silence, a great doubt, a great perhaps, and a name of fatal glory *." This is not, you perceive, the style of our Bentleys and Warburtons, but it is severe enough for all that. It must be confessed, however, in excuse for so many harsh expressions once generally, and even still, as you perceive, sometimes used, that it could not have been easy to retain proper serenity while replying to some of the lucubrations which led to them. "Thus Gibbon, for example," as M. de Sacy says, "actually takes the side of the hangmen against the martyrs." The Christians were so imprudent, for carrying things so far—"such Ultramontanes!" he would have added, if the word had been invented; and then, after all, there were not so many of them killed as the vulgar suppose. All this an English journal has been lately repeating, apropos of the sublime picture in the International Exhibition of the young martyr about to be exposed to the lions in the amphitheatre of Rome. Then others go on coolly to assure us that there is no future life, no future happiness; that men are only like moths, created for a day, unworthy of any Providential care; only intended to flutter for an instant and then perish; in short, that all religion is hurtful, for they go to this length at times, and that Christianity is only a

* Le Fin d'un Monde.

myth. Perhaps, however, the best idea of all was that of the French Deist, Merlin de Thionville, who, apparently anxious to keep off his God at as great a distance from himself as possible, used to name him, not the Supreme Being, as did Robespierre, following Rousseau, but the "Creator of the fixed stars," throwing him back thus beyond the planets, as Sainte-Beuve remarks. Their open hostility and positive rage against all religious forms would have left no trace on the European soil of all that faith had ever constructed; and of their expressions we still from time to time catch echoes. But why proceed, when, as Cleona says, not more poetically, if we except the terms, than with exact truth,

> "——— The mandrake hath no voice
> Like this; the raven and the night-birds sing
> More soft; nothing in nature, to which fear
> Hath made us superstitious, but speaks gently
> Compared with thee?"

For observe, though in its first period, as Lacordaire remarks, incredulity may be accepted, and that too with a kind of joyful indifference; in its second period, which awaits every one who has had experience of the first, it is not accepted, and it turns to torment and to the anguish of an exile. O what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do! not knowing what they do! O Heaven! can it be that men should live with such unfeeling souls, without a touch or conscience of religion? or that their warping appetites should spoil those honoured forms that youthful piety, the true seal of friendship and of all goodness had set upon their faces? However, though scepticism continues to proceed as it has always arisen, and will ever arise from the same three sources, namely, from a voluntary predominance of the material over the ideal order, from a rejection of the revelation imparted by the spectacle of the universe, and from a renouncement of the primeval oral lesson conveyed by language and tradition, though whether absolute or partial, scepticism must arise from a refusal to be guided by these three means which God has given to the human race for their attainment of eternal felicity, and consequently, though rationalism must ever be repugnant to all who follow the light which illuminates ever

man coming into this world, still, to use the words of De Sacy, "as there are objections which are no longer made, so are there answers which ought not to be any more made." And indeed, if you will hear St. Augustine, some replies were never seasonable; for to those who ask what God was employed upon before the Creation, he would not reply like those who evade the question by a pleasantry, saying He was preparing punishment for those who seek to fathom mysteries,—"To laugh," he says, "is not to reply; and I would rather confess my own ignorance than treat with raillery a profound question and ask praise for a ridiculous answer*." The times of openly profligate and unlearned infidelity are nearly gone by; but we still meet occasionally with an attenuated, studious, amiable, and even venerable wanderer through these fields of reflection, refined in manners, subtle to thread a path through mazes of thought, borrowing much from what he discards in words, while seeking, as the ancients would say, a knot in a bulrush, creating difficulties where they do not exist, entangled in cobwebs of his own conjuring up, practised perhaps even in the art of suggesting doubt respecting the first elements of human knowledge, a man too old to seem capable of any change of mental scenery now, who looks like one "so lated in the world that he has lost his way for ever." But to be serene one ought not to be awed by either the talents or the aspect of men who, however venerable, are sometimes, if the truth were known, from youth to age, only learning how to doubt, and to whom the verses of La Fontaine might be so well applied,—

> "Trop bien ont-ils quelque art qui vous peut plaire,
> Quelque jargon plein d'assez de douceurs,
> Mais d'être sûrs ce n'est là leur affaire."

The Catholic doctrine," says Lacordaire, "cannot lay down a single dogma without having a negation against it offered by rationalism. It is so to-day, and it will be so to-morrow and for ever. It is the nature of error to create resources against all truths, without which the liberty of our intelligence would be only a chimera." But this is no cause for discouragement.

* Confess. xi. 12.

One ought not, in fact, to dread on such grounds any adversa-
ries, whether coarse or refined, whether scientific or literary
though as it is not either our province or our object to argue
matters with them on any ground but one, namely, the interest
of serene hours, it would be better and more to our purpose
to say merrily with Horatio in an old play,

> "I have a lease, sir, of my brains, and dare
> Encounter with an army out of Lapland;"

and in this sense the simplest of us, if we only accept the panoply
offered to all, may repeat the words with truth; and indeed no
especially with literal truth, when as in the days of the "immor
tal Elizabeth," people go in disguise to that conjuror and to the
cunning woman, and ask questions and set down the answers
and as Ben Jonson adds, "believe them above the Scriptures."
Like Anthony he may seem unprepared, at least while on the
river, for reasoning on such matters; but all the while he is
generally so prepared that those who attack him may seem no
sufficiently prepared for avoiding the dilemmas he can lead them
into. For, in fine, neither God nor man, nor any thing in the
world has created truth. It is eternal of itself by itself. As
Balzac says, "truth is truth. Though the world fall to ruin
two and two will be four, the whole will be greater than its
parts, lines from a centre to the circumference will be equal
and as with mathematics, so will it be out of that reign, and
true thing pronounced to be such by common sense, even when
standing on revealed ground, will continue a true thing to
eternity." There are in ethics and morals, such as the principles
of Christian antiquity involve, eternal truths, *αἰώνια δίκαια*,
Justin Martyr calls them, things just and true, which were not
made such at certain times by law and arbitrary command, but
being such in their own nature immutably, are from everlasting
to everlasting, and, as it is said of that eternal Word, which
comprehends all truth, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever
—truths therefore that demonstrate the necessity of there being
an eternal mind, since they cannot possibly be any where but
in a mind; truths, we may add, that are incompatible with
rational disbelief in revelation, as it is offered to us, on an
authority; and truths to which every thing, really of the

religion, may appeal for a confirmation of all that its theology, absolutely and unreservedly, lays down. So that to ask why such and such things must enter into its system, and why their number must be just what we know it to be, is to ask why there must be seven tones in music, or seven colours in light, or three terms for a proportion. Upon the whole, we logically infer that it is by no means rash to conclude that there must be something wrong in the mind or in the heart, or at least in the circumstances of a man who resolutely rejects an invitation to embrace truths of this order, with all their consequences. "As for me, at all events," says a genuine representative of an eligible candidate for our circle, addressing one inclined to pick a philosophico-theological quarrel with him, "you have to do with a man who believes nothing more truly than what he has learned from his mother and his nurse. Even in things that do not regard religion, if formerly I have had opinions of my own, I resign them now with all my heart in order to reconcile myself to the people, and not seem an opponent for a word or other trifle. If some one we know had followed this way, he would have had more serene hours. But he preferred to end by a tragedy rather than do nothing but common things. But in truth, however, at any time my mind was debauched, I have always submitted to the authority of the Church, and to what is held by the common consent of the people. For as I thought that it would be easier for a drop of water to be corrupted than all the sea, I concluded similarly that private opinions could never be so sound as general ones. It is not for man to scrutinize the secrets of heaven. The only glory left for us is that of humility and obedience; and since it is certain that the reason of man does not extend as far as the truth of things, instead of pleading for points of theology, it ought to suffice us to adore its mysteries." "As for what you say," he continues, "about the Scriptures, while charging me with want of respect for them, all you say is true, but all that regards others and not me. The shadow even of sacred places moves my mind to piety, and I adore even the stops and syllables of the Bible." "With these doctrines," says M. de Sacy, "Christianity has produced saints; that is incontestable. There have been, there still are saints. Christianity alone produces them. That is already a great

miracle; and, for my part, that is what moves me most." "It is no less certain," he continues, "that these doctrines, even those that at first sight most shock reason, if they do not give a clear solution of the great problems of this world, ward off the false and bad solutions which reason might sometimes be tempted to give of them. If these doctrines do not disclose the whole secrets of God, and no one pretends that they do, or if they reveal them under a form profoundly mysterious, they make us know the secret of man—the limits of our nature, our weakness, and our resources—what we can and what we cannot achieve. But the fact is, that all these doctrines are marvellously adapted to human nature. Moreover, besides the truths which are common with it and philosophy, religion as well as reason has in its domain parts that are inexplicable, on which man is irresistibly drawn to meditate and to study, if not what to know, at least what to believe. It is however peculiarly the region of mysteries to which our heart, in spite of us, makes us turn. So that religion has also its own torch—faith, mysterious light, which enables us to see without our being able to render an exact account of what we see, and from which we ought only to demand the light that is necessary to make safe our steps in the obscurity in which we walk. The fault of apologists is to seek for more proof than the subject admits of; they explain when they ought only to hold up." But when a doctrine takes the form of a mere mental amusement or exercise of talent people, as Sainte-Beuve remarks, think themselves allowed to discuss it; and moreover, as he adds, "they confess that when they see so subtle an instrument so well used, they are always afraid lest those who play on it should create distinctions and proofs which are only in the instrument itself, that is to say, in the texture of the language, and which vanish away as soon as with an exact mind, any one presses things closely." The remark applies to those who are not satisfied with the obscurity in which some subjects are left by human reason and the principles of the Christian faith. But this is a fault of which the lovers of the serene are never guilty. To quarrel with religion because it is profound and mysterious, is what they are ever less inclined to. What madness! and even what a want of logic! No, Monsieur Diderot, as Rameau says, "to believe

nothing is a bad job. One is then a miserable creature bent to the earth and pushed into the abyss. I prefer that religion in which you do not believe, poor man! while you believe in M. Lekain, in M. Brizard, in M. Jéliotte, and in Mlle. Quinault. As for me, I believe, and the more miserable a creature I am, and the more need I have of pardon, the more I believe in the God who pardons. I must have a priest and an altar, and banners and processions, and the bells of the festival; and not a philosopher, that is to say, a fallen angel, a torch put out, of which the smoke supplies the place of an illumination, however partial *."

Thus do great and serene intelligences, the most aware of the difficulties around us, resolve to leave them as they find them, and exemplify the rule of Richard of St. Victor, saying that "to a faithful soul nothing ought to be more authentic than what sounds from the mouth of all, and what the Catholic authority confirms †." But this, you say, supposes theology and an acquiescence in what it lays down? Well, and pray now after all what is theology? For many dislike the word. Let Lacordaire answer ‡. "Theology is both a human and a divine thing—a human, because science and reason occupy a considerable place in it; a divine thing, because faith is its chief element. Whence it follows that theology has the character of being a creation in the hands of man, but a creation of a superior order, requiring in him who is its instrument a rare assemblage of the gifts of nature and of grace. What place does theology occupy? It is not in God, for it reasons; it has its obscurities, and in God is neither deduction nor obscurity, but full and perfect light. It is not either in the universe, for that is the aggregate of material things, and theology is not a body. We must seek it therefore somewhere less elevated than God, and higher than the universe. The intelligence of man then, being this middle region, is the place of theology. Now the intelligence of itself cannot tell us what is the will of God in our regard. Arrived at that height it staggers and is troubled. Yet God must will

* Le Fin d'un Monde. † De Trinit. lib. iv. c. 20.

‡ Discours sur S. Thom. d'Aquin.

that we should know his will. It is impossible to conceive a God who does not communicate, as it were, the family secrets to his intelligent creature! These secrets we possess, in faith. Reason makes the man; faith the Christian. Christianity alone has a theology. The Gentile philosophy had it not, unless in the Metamorphoses of Ovid. The Gentiles had mythology; had also what the holy fathers regarded as a natural patrimony of Christianity—the common sense of men and the obscure light of reason working upon primeval traditions—but you see what they made of it in Greece and Rome. Mahometanism has its code, borrowed from the Bible, but having war for its means and barbarism for its term. India and Thibet meditate, but both are lost in the vague reveries of a perpetual childhood. Where then is theology in the human intelligence? In that region we have found that there exist science, reason, and faith: but, marvellous and sad result! we find that these three elements can combat each other and become enemies. Science can disdain reason as a dream decorated with the name of metaphysics; it can actually despise the common notions of truth, and justice, and God. All this is seen in the broad light of day, as well as in the darkness of secret initiations. On the other hand, reason can rise against faith. It can be irritated by the obscurities of the Word of God, and it can prefer the science which insults to the faith which honours it. These are the more than civil wars of which the historian speaks. Now, it is theology which establishes peace between these three powers—science, reason, and faith. Theology is neither science, nor reason, nor faith, but all the three in a sublime accordance. It is the summit of our mind, the repose of the soul, the serenity of the heart, having only a shadow to pass to see God. Theology thus brings all things to the beatitude of union, and in the harmony of science, reason, and faith, presents a spectacle grander than all that is comprised in that of the visible universe. In fine, it derives from faith, daughter of the Word of God, a certainty in the sphere of divine things, which it extends to those of nature and humanity, giving to science a greater elevation, to reason a vaster space, to faith a clearer light, and to all that, unity which constitutes their force, their joy, and their efficacity for the

happiness of the human race. Theology embraces all things in heaven or on earth. Such is its property of assimilation and of analysis, that all truth confirms it, and all error makes it appear greater. In fine, this is what establishes in the midst of you the stable and progressive accordance of science, of reason, and of faith, without which union the world is condemned to an eternal disorder." You have heard the answer. What have you to object to theology then? Is it not indicative of solid and lofty thoughts? and in close connexion with the subject of serene hours? "Yes, truly," as St. Augustine says, "it is not for nothing, as some men think, it is not to uphold a phantasmal illusion that the Christian faith has been raised to that height of authority through the universe with which we see it invested." Indeed, what should give us pause, there is nothing wholly false in any professional science or tradition. Bolingbroke would have done well to ponder a little on this fact before launching forth with such exceptionless vehemence against what he called the artificial theology, in his letter to Alexander Pope; especially when we consider that what he disliked so much to adopt admits of an appeal, when circumstances require it, to the most elementary principles, and even perhaps to what he regarded as nature itself. Besides, art is nature. A few years ago you might possibly have thought the rules of artists, with regard to perspective and the representation of objects on a flat surface, a mere conventional thing, which any one might refuse to accept as truthful, if he chose. It is certain that you might refer to many persons who did practically refuse to accept them, and who were as insensible to the effect resulting from them as a mule or a dog would be. The Count de Caylus remarks, that among sensible people there are multitudes who cannot understand a foreshortened limb, or the drawing of a building as seen in profile. The ancients even, with all their knowledge of the laws of optics, did not for a long time dare to express, "artificially," the truth of nature in this respect, through fear of being not understood, and he finds traces of this fact on the old coins and medals, on which different sides of temples are seen simultaneously in front, for if they had been represented in perspective, the multitude would have cried out against

such a perversion, as they would have thought it*. Well, no doubt there are people in England who would experience precisely the same impression. But lo! by means of photography the sun comes to us, as it were, in the form of a drawing-master, bringing its light from another world, employs exactly the same process, keeps precisely to the old rule, all artificial and conventional as you might have called it, and so confirms what men had been telling you as the result of science.

We are not seated to-day in the cold schools which are content with logic; and when warmed with that bodily exercise which makes the heart so generous, it is hard to leave any one to the misery of his unbelief; for in such mood we are not like witty Beatrice, charged with another's troop of busy, meddling, clamorous, new-fangled, giddy-in-desire monkeys, content to go as far with them as the gate of the evil Porter, so to deliver up her apes, and away herself to St. Peter for the heavens, there to live merry as the day is long. It is hard, I say, to leave any one, though with such qualities, to pursue the track that seems to promise a sinister ending; to leave him, without faith, in a state of a studied and most unnatural thoughtlessness, aping scepticism, and ready to fight for it with tooth and nail,—constrained to use jargon for ideas, and so ordered by his philosophy, like Marphurius, to enounce no decisive proposition, to speak of every thing with uncertainty, always to suspend his judgment, never passing beyond "it seems," and only concluding, perhaps, with such words as the Greek poet uttered in his bitterness,—"the race of voice-dividing men is nothing. Hand me, friend, what remains of the sparkling cup, and the wine that is the oblivion of sorrows!" It is hard, I say, to feel resigned to such inaction; but it is not for "the like of us" to help the unbeliever out of this gulf, however we might wish to lend a hand. We may have leisure enough, "Sed, quis ego sum?" as Lælius says, "aut quæ in me est facultas?" There are others who can succeed without our aid; and even without their aid there are means for him of escape, since we find from experience that

* De la Perspective des Anciens, Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscr. tom. xxxix.

frequently these doubts and difficulties are but the last husks of the prodigal before finding his way back to his father's house. We must return to those whose faith in the Church "forms," as Lacordaire does not scruple to say, "in their intelligence an abyss of voluptuous certainty, consorting with those who aspire to be the disciples but not the God of the Gospel, who usurp no place, arrogate nothing, and become again like children, their souls reviving with this innocent breath*." Such men left behind, a portion of the world at this time of day uses language that sounds very antiquated to some ears, saying like Balzac, "Let us not touch the body of the Church, not even its habits, nay, not even to the border and fringe of its robe. Let every thing belonging to it be in veneration down to the least of its customs, the slightest of its ceremonies. Our first father was as guilty for having eaten an apple as if he had pulled up all the trees of the garden. Seek no other religious truth but what your fathers within that fold taught you. If you renounce their creed, you renounce the best part of their succession. You are disinherited, and the worst is, that you disinherit yourself by a bad interpretation of the text that you understand not. Adore the mysteries with closed eyes, and do not become a special pleader upon points of religion. Do you want to be wiser than Providence? wiser than all Christian nations and all Christian ages? If you have such confidence in your own judgment, you do not belong to Christendom. You are a citizen of another sort of republic, and we have nothing to do with you." Yes, truly; having to notice the dispositions required for serenity arising out of faith, there is occasion, as Richard of St. Victor says, to place one's hand over one's mouth, lest we should seem to contaminate the thrice-hallowed secrets with profane lips. They are learned, he says, by experience better than by exposition. It is not even safe to publish abroad what ought with great reverence to be kept within the cloister of a silent heart. Let us say, therefore, "secretum meum mihi†."

It falls not to our province, comrades, my merry men all, as you well know, to remain long upon such ground as this. Here

* Lettres à un jeune Homme.

† In Ps. xxviii.

all things, we might say, citing ancient words, are "sublime, engendered within the firmament of heaven, nor did the perishable nature of man give them being, no, nor shall oblivion drown them in sleep; they bid thee, when strained purely from all hollow bias-drawing, with most divine integrity, from heart of very heart, to accept, employ, and cherish them." But one cannot avoid observing as one of the multitude, one of the people, a lover perhaps, at least a good sort of fellow, as I firmly believe each of us wishes himself to be thought with truth, how greatly certain doctrines tend to shed a delightful peace over the mind, and to qualify persons for the serene enjoyment of every thing within and around them. It is true, there is reason to fear still, in spite of our preamble, lest such allusions should seem here out of place, and because they do not fall within the sphere of daily and polite conversation in stately circles, lest we should seem to affect a gravity which suits neither the time nor circumstance, which formal people will think must needs resemble their own, and still less, for other reasons, such lips as ours; but, in fact, they present themselves uninvited to our notice now; and after observing some few of these adaptations, we shall pass on to other matters.

Were we left wholly to ourselves, there would be great truth in the remark of M. de Sacy, "that it is not a little matter to analyze oneself, and to know exactly what one holds and what one does not hold." But faith, with all its serene assurance, may be ours; for the will is more concerned here than the intelligence, which last, without the former, might wofully deceive when employed on matters beyond its competence. There is not, indeed, in the nature and intelligence of man, even with the best will, so great a power of vision that he can see things of heaven, unless they are shown to him; but neither is there such obscurity in them that one cannot appreciate them, if one has the will to do so, when once they are revealed; and, as Richard of St. Victor says, "we should always endeavour, as far as is allowable or possible, to comprehend by reason what we hold from faith*"—maxim, by the way, of all Catholics, which disproves the misrepresentation of the lively writer who says

* De Trinitate i. Proleg.

forsooth, that they think "a thirst for knowledge to be the enemy of faith, and that they so proudly plume themselves on the latter as to fancy that God dispenses with their reason worshipping Him." Are you discouraged, distrustful, or melancholy with thoughts relating to the eternal years?

> "Sunt verba, et voces, quibus hunc lenire dolorem
> Possis et magnam morbi deponere partem."

Only don't let us take the dicta of Sophists for these words and voices; but let us say with another poet to the authority divinely established on earth, and divinely handed down to transmit the desposit of faith respecting matters of spiritual concern, which experience proves lose all force and coherence without it,—

> "Teach me how to think and speak;
> Lay open to my earthly gross conceit,
> Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,
> The source of hope and consolation."

"Nature, then," says Richard of St. Victor, one of the representatives of that authority, "nature, which fell by believing, must rise again by believing. It fell believing the serpent, it rises believing the Redeemer. By presumption, and as if by rapine, man thought to ascend to the likeness of God. Reason required that the repairer of our ruin should descend by exinanition from the likeness of God to the similitude of the fallen. 'Custos, quid de nocte?' Many, not only of the Jews, but of the Gentiles, foresaw and desired Christ. He was the desired of the nations. Divinely enlightened and taught by natural reason, they understood the darkness of the human race, and of idolatry. Some more, some less, felt its ignominy. They had an indistinct knowledge of Paradise and of the fall, and of the world being a state of exile. They felt the danger, but they did not equally understand the remedy. A few seem even to have foreseen the latter. Some even foretold it. 'Duce ratione,' they were prepared for the light of revelation, reconciling justice with mercy, the former opprobrium of sin with its abolition and the recovery of pristine dignity, the need of satisfaction, of an appeased conscience, and of peace, by the suffering of One who was God and man." "From reason, therefore,"

concludes this great intelligence, "could be collected that the Mediator must be God and man*." "They desired," he concludes, "what they did not dare to ask. They sighed and wept for it; the prophets invoked it—'Emitte agnum dominatorem terræ†.' 'Emitte manum tuam de alto‡.' 'Utinam dirumperes cœlum ac venires§!' 'Excita potentiam tuam et veni, ut salvos facias nos||.'" In fine, the Church, unlike some who never cease bidding us tremble and despond, every year in Advent repeats these great words, which seem to have so especial a reference to those anxious to exchange fears for serenity, —"Dicite pusillanimis, confortamini et nolite timere, ecce Deus noster veniet et salvabit nos." "Say, then, infamous Zabulon," exclaims Richard of St. Victor, addressing the evil one, and speaking as if appointed to be their advocate, "what hath availed thy fraud? The mercy of Christ hath done more for us than thy insidious malice took from us. Lo, man is indeed made as God, knowing good and evil, which thou didst fraudulently promise. Lo, God is made true man, which never entered into thy thought to conceive. Lo, all conqueror as thou wert, how thou art now vanquished! Thou didst deceive the woman, and by the woman thou didst cast us down. But, lo, in the woman thou art in thy turn deceived, and by the woman art thou overthrown¶." "Christianity," says the Abbé Gerbet, "taken as a whole, is nothing but a great alms given to a great misery;" that's the view and the conviction required for serene hours. They require us to learn that, as the Church says, when about to celebrate the Passion, "Redemptor noster, humanis condolens miseriis, pro totius mundi vita cum mortis Principe esset pugnaturus ac moriendo triumphaturus**." They require that we should be able to say, with St. Francis de Sales, to those who doubt our sentiments on this point, "What say you of us? Does it seem to you that we recognize as we ought the grace of our Lord, his redemption, and his mediation††?" They require us to know that He who is to us wisdom and justice has been

* De Verbo incarnato, c. viii. 10.
† Isa. xvi.
‡ Ps. cxliii.
§ Isa. lxiv.
|| Ps. lxxix.
¶ De Emmanuele, lib. i. c. 1.
** On Palm Sunday.
†† Serm. pour le 12me Dim. d'après la Pentecoste.

numbered amongst us, as St. Augustine says, and has paid our tribute to Cæsar. Therefore, in the sweetest, gayest, sunniest moment, comprised in their enjoyment, from many a heart, both male and female, that you little think of associating with such thoughts, out of the depth of its consolations arise, inaudibly at least, these sacred words, "Dignus est Agnus qui occisus est accipere virtutem, et divinitatem, et sapientiam, et fortitudinem, et honorem, et benedictionem."

From this elementary doctrine, so essential to serene hours,—yes, it is said advisedly,—so essential to constitute them, one ought not to pass without noticing its corollary, as expressed by the same great voice, in words which, however mystical, it would behove some to ponder, for all their protests; being not alone so redolent of peace, but so reasonable, so consistent, and in such accordance with what all Christian antiquity, while invoking serenity, believed and confessed. Unlike its modern adversaries, Catholicism knows of no dead saints, of no souls that magnified the Lord, lost to all consciousness and amerced of the sentiments of affection, and mortal in the ordinary and literal sense of the word. Such an idea does not enter within the sphere of its conceptions. In fact, were it admitted, we should have to revolutionize even our profane literature. "By eight to-morrow," said Shakspeare's Provost to the condemned Claudio, "thou must be made immortal." We should have to erase these words; and so on through endless passages of this one poet alone. Well, then, this being so, to arrive at the corollary developed by the great Richard, "since," as he says, "both angels and holy souls are solicitous for sinners, coming to their aid by intercessions, it must be believed then that the blessed Virgin can do as much in this way as both these creatures, or rather can do more, since both are, in a certain implied sense, repaired by her. Why should it seem strange that the blessed Virgin, who instrumentally reconciled the world and bore grace itself, yea, the fountain of grace, which flows to the ends of the earth, should yield the milk of reconciliation and grace to sinners? For she is the paradise from whence that fountain flowed, which was thence divided into four rivers; for from the body of Christ, which came forth from her, flows the fountain of blood which sacramentally passes through the four

parts of the world to the cleansing of sins and infusion of grace. Her piety hastens with more speed than it is invoked, and anticipates the cries of the miserable. A singular prerogative of grace was hers, because she was privileged above all women that she should nourish, with virginal milk, not alone pure man, but God. Think of it for yourself; turn it in your thoughts. Singular grace, to which nothing was ever like either before or after! To her, therefore, we cry; for misery has a loud voice, and this valley tears,—and as wherever the body is there are the eagles, so wherever there is wretchedness there comes her pity: nor is it strange that under the government of Him who wishes us all to be like Himself in goodness, mercy should flow from her who in one sense produced mercy *." "The charity of the blessed Virgin," he continues, "was extended not alone to her own nation—the Jews, but to all men, the known and the unknown. For all she ceaselessly prayed; and we know that an angel said to her 'invenisti gratiam apud Deum.' She desired, sought, and, in a certain sense, we may say, obtained the salvation of all; for by the fruit of her womb was effected the salvation of the human race †." "Ecce Adam factus est quasi unus ex nobis, sciens bonum et malum." "That voice of reproof is now turned into matter of praise. Lo, now we dare to say that man is made as if one with God on account of divinity, and God made, as it were, one of us on account of his humanity. Lo, what the fecundity of the Virgin hath accomplished for us ‡!" Justly, rationally therefore, consistently, and in strict conformity with the old Christian traditions, not always expressed and promulgated in every page of the patristic writings, but always implied in them as naturally and logically arising out of the facts of the Gospel history, left to the custody of habit, without any formal inculcation by writing perhaps at times, but never effaced, though here we may think them most eloquently expressed, is the human race invited in this nineteenth century of ours to honour her whom the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have honoured. Can all be serene within a man while he refuses to imitate Them, and would rather convulse

* In Cant. Cantic. xxiii. † Ibid. xxvi.

‡ De Emmanuele, lib. i. c. 20.

three kingdoms than do so? Well, Christian antiquity at least, to limit our appeal exclusively to that tribunal, would not be of this opinion, since its voice is heard annually in those consecrated words, "ut quibus beatæ Virginis partus extitit salutis exordium, Nativitatis ejus vetera solemnitas pacis tribuat incrementum per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum *."

There are other principles involved in this wide world of thought, which it might be well to notice, merely as conducive to the peace and serenity of our brightest hours. Poets have not feared to outstep their more ordinary province by alluding to them; as, for instance, where Shakspeare's Imogen, when she has strewed the grave, would, while acting under their influence, "on it say a century of prayers." But, to allege nothing else in our excuse, time admits not of our suggesting them in detail. In general one may apply to all this aggregation of ideas, sometimes even mystically imparted to the young without instruction, the words of Richard of St. Victor, uttered as if with especial reference to our immediate object, and say, "Præ fulgore in conspectu ejus nubes transierunt. When the divine light thus shines on men, they are filled with such radiance that all ambiguity and doubt are at an end; the clouds are borne away, and in the mind there is perfect serenity †."

But it is not alone a passing glance at a few prominent doctrines, as conducive to our specific object, and a taking for granted the similar tendency of others, which we have no time to enumerate, that should satisfy us here; we must proceed now to observe that, irrespective of every thing else, there is the same result from that general mental culture which is involved in the system in which these doctrines are contained, and by reason of its effects embodied.

Who can doubt the need in which every one stands of mental culture with a view to peace? for, as Philoctetes says, "to whomsoever the judgment shall have become mother of evil, it gains up every thing else to become evil." What impatience around us, even where we expected to find only love and sweet-

* 8th Sept.

† De Eruditione Hominis interioris, i. c. 35.

ness! what imprecations when the least thing goes wrong what sweeping denunciations of things, and places, and per sons! for I would rather allude to what can be remarked in common people like ourselves, than to what others are often engaged with. Then what mistakes in the walks of literature what portentous conclusions from false premises! Clearly we all of us need direction; we need some general elementary prin ciples that will reduce to harmony, and retain in concordan operation, the different and varied faculties of our intellectua being. "Without imagination," says Richard of St. Victor "reason would know nothing; without sensuousness (anothe element, by the way, of poetry), affection would taste nothing,— 'sine imaginatione ratio nihil sciret, sine sensualitate affecti nil saperet.' Imagination serves reason as a handmaiden, a the senses serve affection*." But how necessary to be on one guard against either taken separately, and to have some bett way of security than that proposed by Frederick when perverte in the old play, saying,

> "———— Will you drink, uncle,
> T'other enchanted bottle? You and I
> Will tipple, and talk philosophy."

Thoughts in their results are often worse than deeds witho them. Proud, impatient, rebellious thoughts are very real an effective operations, sometimes on a portentous scale. Oh!— there be more changes in a heart in an hour than can be run upon six bells in seven days; therefore, wisely was it said b Margaret to Beatrice, "I am not such a fool to think what list; nor I list not to think what I can;" nor, indeed, sh might have added, "I cannot think, if I would think my hea out of thinking, that it becomes a man to allow his though more liberty." "Multorum est," says Richard, "se ipsos repr hendere de perverso opere vel prava voluntate; pauci sunt q seipsos dijudicent de inordinata cogitatione †." Yet it is the inordinate thoughts, as was before suggested, more even tha deeds of the body, and a will prompting them, that trouble th

* Benjamin Minor, cap. 5. † Ibid. 20.

order of human life, embitter individual existences, disturb and threaten civilization in its first elements. Hence it is that, as a great author remarks—one perhaps himself somewhat initiated in such mysteries, though after all in some degree who is not?—"there are excavations of all kinds under the social construction; there is the sectarian mine, the philosophical mine, the political mine, the revolutionary mine. The deeper one explores," he says, "the more are the workers mysterious. It is a strange descending scale. Below the heresiarchs of the middle ages and of the sixteenth century, and of the present day under the respectable garb of magistrates, and ministers, and alliances, and missionaries sent by rich old ladies of either sex, you have Voltaire, below Voltaire Condorcet, below Condorcet Robespierre, below Robespierre Marat, below Marat Babeuf, and so on till you come to things that resemble rather phantoms than men. Yes," he continues, "the social order has its black miners; there is a limit where all light is extinguished. Below all these mines that we have named, below all these galleries, below all this immense subterraneous system of Utopias far lower down than any thing utterable, there is the last ledge, a formidable region, where evil becomes less and less ..ed,—inferi, communicating with the depths below, in which selfishness alone. In fine, as this unsuspected witness himself declares, there is beneath society the great cavern of evil, where evil is ever at work,—mining not alone the actual social order, but mining faith, mining all true philosophy, mining even science, mining almost avowedly law and rights, mining human thought, mining all progress. It is darkness; it desires chaos, and its vault is made of ignorance *."

But returning to the surface, and to observe only men of good intentions working in the light of day, what need is there, say again, of direction for all of us! "Væ mihi misero, qui que hodie vivo vagus et profugus super terram. Semper est quod concupiscam, ubique invenio quod fugiam. Felicem i datum est dispersiones cordis in unum colligere, et in illo ræ felicitatis fonte desiderium figere †." This gathering to-

* Victor Hugo.

† Rich. S. Victor, Benj. Minor, cap. 39.

gether of the dispersions of the heart, so fruitful in serenity during lightest hours, and so essential to the success even of every great mental enterprise, belongs to the principles that are submitted to our notice here. Some in their cabinets and business hours may think to treat the subject as a small matter, and to dispose of it accordingly. Perhaps they think that public virtues, that the liberty and happiness of nations are not concerned with it,—that the passions and minds of individuals may have free scope, and things go on all the better for it in the theatre of the world; but others, enjoying a holiday, which lets loose the thoughts to wander farther than their bodies, will learn to appreciate its value even with reference to that enjoyment. Well might Augustin Cochin say in his late admirable discourse, that at this moment it is those who adhere to Christian antiquity who are the guardians of the invisible world. At one time it was thought convenient to admit that they were the guardians only of morals, though even that was contested. It was said that they might be the guardians of peace, as religion taught patience; "but," continues the orator, "I believe, for my part, that they are also the guardians of justice, the guardians of liberty, the guardians of truth, the guardians of spiritualism, the guardians of honour, the guardians of art and of poetry." The two parties are, in fact, if not formally opposed on these very points, at least easily distinguished by their separate relation to them; and in this respect we have an image of their several choices in our oldest record; for the raven that left the ark did not return, because it found carrion scattered abroad; but the dove, who could not live on carrion, when sent forth from the ark, not finding rest, returned to it. It is conducive, therefore, to the attainment of our object, to cherish that general mental culture which consists in our not living on carrion, and in our not leaving our faculties wholly at the mercy of every impulse that rises up, but in the habit of both unconscious combination and of seeking our own completeness by consideration which would correct this alternate tendency to the separation of faculties as the whim or fancy of the hour might suggest,—a tendency otherwise so general, and even, perhaps, so especially observable, in the particular race of persons wishing themselves

to be good fellows with which we are more immediately concerned; for, as Giotto says,

> "No humourist is constant to dislike
> Or commendation."

Let us hear Richard speak of this habit, and gather from his words its necessity for our especial purpose, in order to correct that liability to the vicissitudes of an exclusive attachment to some one influence or another, as the passion of the moment may dictate, which would be so likely to defeat that purpose. "Who," he demands, "can worthily speak of the will and its multiplied affections? What alterations and permutations there! Let each one consider in himself how it varies each day and even moment. What joy one hour, what sadness the next! Even amidst the joy some cause for melancholy springs up, and then all that triumph of jubilation passes! Even for one and the same thing the mind is often moved differently, and moved by contrary affections. We hate what we loved, and detest what we desired. From great a thing seems to become all of a sudden little, and from little, great. Affections grow and decay, and seem to perish, and then they revive again. Who can enumerate all the qualities of human affection? There are as many varieties of affection as there are diversities of things,—'quot sunt diversitates rerum, tot sunt varietates affectionum *.' Think frequently," he proceeds to say, as if recommending a sort of books which pass for light reading, or, rather, that honest fearlessness in contemplating life which is such an element of serene hours, "consider attentively, examine carefully, not alone your own will, but the wills of others, both good and bad. Know your own, that you may learn what you ought to correct, or what to return thanks for. Think of the minds of the perfect, and also of the perverse,—the minds of good spirits, and of malignant spirits,—that from a consideration of contraries you may know what to imitate, and what to avoid. Attend to what you know, attend to what you do not know. Observe how much you rise above the spirit of brutes, and how much you are inferior to angelic spirits. If you attend to your pre-eminence, you

* Rich. S. Victor, Benj. Major, lib. iii. c. 22.

will sing from your heart, 'Benedicam dominum! qui tribuit mihi intellectum;' if you think of your inferiority, you will exclaim, 'Deus, tu scis insipientiam meam*.'"

Conducive, again, in a high degree to serenity must be that kind of mental culture which, amidst all its intellectual objects, so cherishes the affections and the loving faculties of our nature as to make it impossible for men innocently to mistake "the spirit of Christianity for any thing that contains the least taste of the fiery, the bitter, or the sour." We are told by grave, holy persons, that sweetness is required in religion, even in that domain which is most grave and absolute. How necessary must it be to possess it in order to temper and to make serene our ordinary thoughts and actions! As a celebrated writer says, "The great secret of morals is love, or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own." It is the secret no less of intelligence. And this Pascal even felt: for he did not believe that it was by metaphysical and abstract reasoning men could be led to conviction. He wished, as the Chancellor d'Aguesseau remarks, that they should proceed to intelligence by the heart, and prove the truth of God by feeling Him. "Perfect faith," said he, "is God made sensible to the heart;" and it is to hear this secret voice that the philosopher himself wished to recall men. "In the celestial hierarchy," as even a philosopher not predisposed to theology remarks, "by a noble sentiment, the seraphs or angels of love rank higher than the cherubs, who are the angels of knowledge." But let us hear Richard, showing all this in his mystic way. "'Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt, in domum Domini ibimus.' We will go, says Adam. He was unwilling to say, I will go. Speaking to his Eve, he did not wish to say, You will go, but he said, We will go. By Adam we understand reason, by Eve, affection, by the House of God, eternity. To Adam belongs knowledge, to Eve, love. If you think eternal things, but do not love them, Adam goes, and alone," and a sad business he makes of it. "If you know eternal things, and desire them, Adam goes, but is not alone," and then all is pleasant. So to know and to love

* Rich. S. Victor, Benj. Major, lib. iii. 13.

eternal things it is necessary for Adam and Eve both to go*. How wise and beautiful! how charming and romantic is this! For when will reason falter, or play the truant with us, when invited to proceed in such company? It is when you keep it alone and isolated in a frightful dull solitude that it turns perverse, and seeks to mislead you. "Luckily, then," as a philosopher says, "delightfulness is not incompatible with greatness, willing soever as men may be in their present imperfect state to set the power to subjugate above the power to please."

Another result of the mental culture emanating from the same source is the security which it yields to thought when directed over that vast open country through which the intelligence so often, with little profit, wanders. Some men, devoted to what they call philosophy, seem to apprehend thraldom here; and so they complain loudly. But with how little reason! since, for any thing that nature and most people care much about, every one is treated by this religious culture like Tityrus, who accordingly thanks God for his serene hour, being permitted to play what he likes on his rustic reed. "The spirit of examination," says a great author whom no one will suspect of partiality on our side at present, "ought to be exercised in recognizing where commences that which is above reason. To signalize the regions that are incomprehensible, without pretending either to deny or to prove them, is to employ the spirit of inquiry according to its measure and its object†." The truth is that philosophy itself, if one may express an opinion respecting it, should be pleased by such assistance as this culture yields, which defends, without seeking either to enslave or to embarrass it; only, in fact, preventing those who cultivate it from drowning themselves in their own talent, to use the expression of Rivarol when speaking of one who was left to plunge and flounder so alone. It might, with a slight change, use the words of Armado to the frightened Costard: "Sweet soul, I mean setting thee at liberty, enfreedoming thy mind. Thou wert restrained, captivated, bound. I give thee thy liberty, set thee from durance, and in lieu thereof impose on thee nothing but the

* In Ps. cxxii.

† Madame de Stael, De l'Allemagne, ii.

care of thyself." Exactly so, and I'll give thee an example "We have seen," says Madame Swetchine, writing to the poe Turquety, "so many persons in our time allowing themselve every thing, and obtaining, in regard to an honourable an solid success, absolutely nothing, that I should like to see peopl by way of a change, trying to circumscribe themselves, and t confine their genius within the sphere of inviolable truth, fro which an immense result might flow to them, like the mass o water which is yielded by an artesian well that likewise interr gates the earth only at one point*." This of course is invokin the assistance of an authoritative restraint; but, assuredly peace of mind, which philosophers themselves, one might sup pose, ought to esteem, and of which we above all poor exc sionists are amorous, is greatly promoted by appreciating guidance which checks all dreary, fatal wanderings, opposed the very constitution of human nature, such as violations of show themselves to be,—

> "Quumque iter ambiguum est, et vitæ nescius error
> Diducit trepidas ramosa in compita mentes †."

And after all, where is the thraldom? Beyond the limits faith, which even if we would we could not pass with a consciousness of understanding any thing, it would be ha to find it; for I will not suppose any one at this time of d identifying the Catholic and immortal Church with either t spirit, though inoperative in a physical sense, of the odio tyranny of the Inquisition in the seventeenth century, as at earlier period, when the intellectual question was less mixed with it, or with the well-meant, but ill-advised proceedings though in accordance with the general spirit of all parties eve where, of any Italian congregation. In this sense the words the Roman orator are still verified, so as to dispel the fear being mentally enslaved,—"Proprium esse Romani homin nemini servire." This fact seems now-a-days to be only unde stood by authority itself, that is, at Rome. For elsewhere, a amongst those who have no personal authority, the abuse co sists in a needless and unregarded appeal to it; as Mada

* Lettres, i. 419. † Pers. v.

Swetchine remarks in one of her letters, where she complains of people being anxious to recommend a filial adhesion to some arbitrary yoke that pleases themselves individually. According to them, she says, "the successive application of judgment is proscribed; and consequently, as far as the intelligence is concerned, all things would pass even within this adorable fold of variety in unity, the government of which permits every thing that it does not expressly forbid, between the reprobation of one party and the inert acquiescence of the other; that is, we should have to close our ears against words the most lightly adverse, if it be not only in appearance, and abstain from all control over words that are friendly in a way that we ourselves fancy to be dangerous. That some should secretly think so is no great harm, for in the Church all shades of opinion are represented; but if a poor narrow path be substituted for the great broad highway, that is of all times, where should the majority of us be with our different loads of impediments? Yes," she adds, "I dread the rapidity of steps in the career of intellectual despotism self-imposed, and in contradiction to the wish of authority itself*." Nor is there any thing new in such enlarged views as held by those most devout and faithful to the ancient principles. "This incomprehensible goodness of God," says Balzac, "so loves men, that it even prepares play for them, and so provides food for their natural subtlety. It allows us to divert ourselves in the schools, but only on conditions. We can play as long as we like, provided our play be innocent. But even out of Paradise there are forbidden fruits. And this is a proof of his love for us, because these fruits cannot be gathered without risk; they are mixed with poisons, and they grow on precipices. God is not pleased at our showing our address in such dangerous places; at our climbing goat-paths, and displaying our bravery where we should be simple and timid. These are the passes of science, only when become the minister of some latent evil in the heart, famous by the falls of some of the learned. And yet there are some always willing to follow them; and there are even others who make precipices for themselves, and fall with premeditation where the road is safe and even."

* Lettres, ii. 405.

But liberty is your pass-word. Well, it is given to us. Had St. Augustine no liberty? St. Thomas none? Were not Malebranche and Bossuet free? Do you think it was a want of intellectual freedom which prevented them from writing like rationalists? Does not their mind exercise a sovereign liberty? Is it not such men who would be the first to echo Hamlet's words,—

> "Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and godlike reason
> To rust in us unus'd?"

Yet you are not satisfied. Is it that you invoke unrestrained licence of thought? mental barbarism? or a wanton preference of your own fancies in matters of metaphysical subtlety to the tradition of the Church? Very likely; for unto whom Rome is too little, what can be enough?

> "But, headstrong liberty is lash'd with woe;
> There's nothing situate under heaven's eye
> But hath its bound, on earth, in sea, in sky."

Some men of great intelligence are now of opinion, indeed, that the way which leads through such licentious and chaotic regions, is the best you can take, if you wish to appreciate even the philosophic and literary advantages of an authoritative promulgation in matters of faith. Can it be necessary, however? I confess I would ask with a great critic, using his style in application to our subject, "Can it be necessary to pass through the method of Schliermacher or Locke, in order to admire St. Augustine and Fenelon? To see Bossuet, St. Francis de Sales, and Sir Thomas More, in their true light, is it quite indispensable to have read Blair and Tillotson, and made the tour of the sectarian literature, even in its noblest form?" Must one have studied Goetz von Berlighen, and the English Book of Homilies, in order to feel the catholicity of Shakspeare? Perhaps it is. At all events, as he concludes, "it is the longest road, and on getting back home again one runs a risk of being so fatigued that there is nothing left for us but going to sleep." Although even in that event, as some great artist in literature says, "sleep

is an opinion." But then to be obliged to follow authority! Aye, perhaps, such as you imagine it to be; but our view of it will not warrant exclamations, for what plain proceedings are more plain than this? Truly, philosophers enjoy no monopoly of dislike for that false, ridiculous type which they present us with as that of authorized religious teachers; men who command for the sake of commanding, who will for the sake of willing, who love authority, not as a means, but because it is authority, and as one loves virtue, who, to repair any imagined loss of it in themselves, have tones and gestures of condescension, and who can master every thing excepting their own anger. But without reference to such caricatures, and supposing only an authority which interposes where no legitimate object of liberty would be obtained by rejecting it, "if option were allowed," says Balzac, "I prefer greatly that reason, prisoner of faith, and sacrificed by humility; that reason overwhelmed and sleeping, aye, even dead and buried at the foot of the altar, to that other reason, self-constituted judge of faith, animated with pride and vanity, which speaks only to reign and to conquer every where. God is more easily found in the calm and sweetness of piety than in the noise and contentions of theology. The labour of the learned is far from moving as quickly or to as great a distance as the leisure or idleness of the humble." In point of fact, freedom is the atmosphere which such restrained and cultivated energies of the intelligence are enabled by these very means to realize. Is it nothing to have no self-imposed restraints from previous opinions, taken up hastily perhaps at first, and from which so many feel it difficult if not impossible to recede afterwards? Besides, it is these very principles which confer moral freedom, and that has a great deal to do with being intellectually emancipated; as when the celebrated Franciscan, Oliver Maillard, replied to the threat of Louis XI., who, being furious at his courage in the pulpit, sent him word that he would have him drowned. "The king is master," said the friar, "but let him know that I shall be in Paradise sooner by water, than he will get there with all his post-horses." Intellectual freedom, even directly, results from these principles. "In a certain sense," says M. de Sacy, "does not Catholicism itself, all severe in orthodoxy as it is, admit and provoke without

ceasing free inquiry? Is it not to the eternal honour of Christianity that it addresses itself to the reason as well as to the heart, and that it has a foundation more serious and worthy of man than that superstitious inclination, and that want of believing something, which constituted in part the basis of ancient paganism? Free inquiry, of course, gives birth to follies just as moral liberty gives birth to crimes; but that has not hindered God from giving man liberty and reason*." "The Christian mind," says a Catholic philosopher, "finds an exquisite pleasure in observing the moral and metaphysical world, and it relishes this delicate enjoyment without fear or scruples. Attached to sure heights by bonds which it loves, it knows that it cannot fall into the abyss of doubt or negation. For it, therefore, an inexhaustible source of pure delight is that philosophy in which others find so many deceptions. It traverses with an insatiable curiosity that vast domain where thought is free, and criticism can be exercised without departing from its legitimate ground†." Formerly indeed it was the curiosity and boldness actually developed under this very authority, rather than the thraldom of scholastics, that men complained of, though to excuse the former. Balzac says that "after all, perhaps, these subtle doctors were wanted for the world, that is, for the world which is inquisitive, fond of disputing and of contradicting. They may have entered into the design of God's providence. You know," he continues, "that different apostles have been sent to different nations, and at different times. There are always ambassadors of this kind waiting for orders. There are more than one St. Paul and one St. Thomas. This latter, he of the school, was sent to the nation of the Peripatetics, which had not been wholly subdued; nation presumptuous and mutinous, which despises authority, and always trusts to reason; which is always asking why this and that; impatient of rest, enemy of peace, disposed to novelty. This last mission, as it seems to me, was not useless."

Again, the love and habit of unity, another fruit of this mental culture, conduce to the calm and internal enjoyment of serene hours.

* Variétés Littéraires.

† Blampignon, sur les Études de Philosophie de Saisset.

St. Paul begs of Euodia and beseeches Syntyche to be of one mind in the Lord *; but there are men now-a-days who tell us that it is quite an obsolete and absurd thing even to entertain the wish that people should be of one mind in religion, and that the delightful variety of the English intelligence in regard to such matters, is a privilege of our race, and an invaluable element to keep us what we are at the head of civilization and humanity. Whatever they may say to evade the dilemma, "id ipsum sapere in Domino," is, to all intents and purposes, held by them to be an unsound state, and highly objectionable. The great Apostle of the Gentiles, however, is of a different opinion; and at least all who love serene hours will subscribe to it from humour as well as through faith. But the truth is, all these pretensions, however expressed in philosophic phraseology, are simply and wholly absurd. The English under Henry VII., physiologically speaking, were the same English as our countrymen at the present day. Endowed with the same capacities and energies, they were not differently constituted by nature. We have not, I suppose, to blush for Shakspeare's Englishmen or women. They were the same mixed Anglo-Saxon people as now. And yet they could say of themselves, even in the beginning of the next reign, that, as Roper remarked to Sir Thomas More, it was "a happy realm that had such loving subjects all in one faithe agreeinge together †." The Church beheld, as she says in Easter week, "the diversity of nations united in the confession of the sacred Name." Celsus, it is true, pronounced a man weak who should hope to unite the three portions of the earth in a common religion. But however it might have puzzled Pagans, whether ancient or modern, to account for it, and even with a fourth or fifth portion added to the map, experience proves that it is not depth or penetration of mind, or a love of freedom, or a constitutional government, or a network of railways, which supplies an obstacle to the realization of such a thought. Even in philosophy it is obvious that the mental culture which tends to unite and harmonize all schools and systems, cannot but conduce to the serenity of our condition at all times. It is a great thing in life, as in science, to know how

* Philip. iv. † Life of Sir T. M., 42.

to unite all true sentiments. This blessing must require a spacious soul; yet it seems to be the peculiar prerogative of Sophists professed, and pretending to possess such a soul, to separate and divide them in every order, and sacrifice one successively to another. "No doubt," as a remarkable writer says, "for this very reason, throughout, with all thoroughly great men, their strength is not seen at first, precisely because they unite, in due place and measure, every great quality." But it is not any faculty given as a guide to the human race that will prevent us, at least eventually, from recognizing the grandeur of that combination. Pascal says, "I do not admire a man who possesses one virtue in all its perfection, if he does not possess at the same time, in an equal degree, the virtue opposed to it." I cite his very words. Evil is the suggestion that noble sentiments are hostile to each other, that they cannot be exercised simultaneously or in harmonious concord. Whole nations, as England for example, might take a useful lesson when this theme is started; for our dear and never-to-be-sufficiently-prized country, as far as the national mind at present can be discerned, has many true sentiments, but not always all. Shame on those who taught her to make a needless, and unnatural, and unholy sacrifice. Religion with ardent piety is a true sentiment; so is also the love of what is natural, and generous, and liberal. Why imagine that these are mutual enemies, and through esteem for one thing sacrifice some other good which we are not required to give up? The man under strong religious impressions, practically, and at least in some degree even theoretically, often condemns human affection; the lover, in a similar way, though indeed not so often, and only when you compel him to do it, theology; the philosopher sets no value on the poetry of life; the poet of common life rather dislikes the very name of philosophy. Joy is a true sentiment; so is the spirit of mortification, and self-sacrifice, and self-command, which, indeed, all ultimately refer to it. Why not praise and admire both? There is a time for accepting all things, without being sickened by the thought of any of them; all in due time, and place, and person, may be well, and sometimes even necessary the one to the other. Gravity, with its severe application and its scientific treatment of things, is a true sentiment, a most noble sentiment;

but so is also the careless enjoyment of a serene hour, with its impulsive and poetic way of considering the same things. Why extol any one of these states of mind at the expense of the rest? Why not admit that there is a necessity for showing regard to all true ideas and true things? "Philosophy does not include theology," says a deep thinker, "but theology includes philosophy; nature does not include grace, but grace includes nature; the natural virtues do not include the supernatural, but the supernatural include the natural *." If such facts had been more attended to, perhaps France, from whom we borrow so much wisely, would not in these latter years, as Sainte-Beuve complains, have heard, instead of the ancient expression "we all Catholics," so often the novel phrase of "we others Catholics;" but it would have continued to be the case as in all preceding ages, when every one who did not say "I am not a Catholic," was thought to be one †. Above all, no writer of genius and of good intentions would then have thought, like a celebrated Frenchwoman, of detecting inconsistency and contradictory lessons in Catholicity itself, for the reason that it approved of the book of the Imitation, and also of that entitled, On the Genius of Christianity, by Chateaubriand. "Which of the two," asks that lively, but often mistaken writer, "was heretical? The one said Be dust and ashes, the other Be flame and light. Believe without examination was the precept of the former; to believe all, examine all, the maxim of the latter. I was perplexed. When galloping on horseback I was all Chateaubriand. By the light of my lamp I was all Gerson." There was nevertheless nothing here that ought to have perplexed her, whether mounted or afoot; there were no two contradictory truths in the bosom of the Church, as she foolishly pretends. Books are made for different states of mind, for different circumstances, just as medicines that have diverse properties are collected for the various maladies of the body. There are times when some are needful, that would be injurious at others; and there is no inconsistency or self-contradiction in our spiritual mother when she makes use of both, and draws from her treasury all kinds, to suit the particular occasion

* Brownson. † Causeries du Lundi, tom. i.

that presents itself. But intemperate zeal, or false, unkind criticism, and narrow, shallow perceptions, have an itching to marshal things in opposition to each other that are in fact allied; they are employed to divide and break up the whole divine and diversified system of human life; leaving some, at least, only wishes or prayers that heaven may bring them and their still wandering nation

> "——— to those springs
> Where souls are everlastingly refresh'd;
> Unto those gardens whose immortal flowers
> Shame your imagined shades and blest abodes."

In the domain of metaphysics a similar direction must certainly conduce no less to the same great object of serenity for all hours.

In every human system which seeks to establish itself by gaining the favours and honours of the world, there is, with more or less of consciousness, a certain compromise continually going on with contemporaneous error of some kind or other. Alone the voice of that authority which guides from Heaven, is at all times and every where inflexible in this regard, saying, like Mounier addressing the National Assembly, "that truth does not belong to any one, and that we cannot sacrifice one part of it in order to save the other." Some have of late laboured to show, by means of philosophy alone, how its different schools can be united; but, as M. de Sacy says, "to try to reconcile their respective systems without really finding their point of union, is only to have three difficulties instead of one." The culture we speak of involves a knowledge of this common focus, while those fostered by its luminous emanations might console and cheer their thoughtful moments by applying to their own mental state what Cicero so vainly predicates of himself, saying, "I rejoice indeed to find that our philosophy, of which the furniture I used to prefer to the estates of others, can be proved so rich—'ut ab ea petere possem quidquid in studiis nostris concupissem.' I rejoice also to find that it is more acute than others*." What in fact can be wanting in it, since the spirit of

* De Finibus v.

Catholicism accepts whatever is capable of being applied to the purposes of truth and goodness? of which fact we need seek no farther proof than the manner in which, during the early and middle ages, it employed the poetry and philosophy of the Gentiles. This is what appeared of late to an accomplished scholar is so interesting in the genius of Calderon. "He was gifted," ays Trench, as if he had just been sitting at the feet of our acordaire, "with an eye singularly open for the true religious lement, which, however overlaid and debased, is yet to be dected in all inferior forms of religion. These religions were to im the vestibules through which the nations had been guided ll they reached the temple of the absolute religion, where God worshipped in Christ. The reaching out and feeling after an nknown truth he recognized in the mythology and religion of ncient Greece. It may be that the Castilian alienation from ne Jew, which was not wanting in him, may in part have been t work where he extols, as he often loves to do, the superior adiness of the Gentile world, as contrasted with the Jewish hurch, to receive the proffered salvation, its greater receptivity f the truth; but be this as it may, it is a theme which he ves, under the most various aspects, to present. And genelly he took delight in finding a deeper meaning for the tales of ne classical world, seeing in them the symbols and unconscious ophecies of Christian truth. He had no misgivings, but that ese would yield themselves freely to be moulded by his hands. e felt that in employing them he would not be drawing down ne sacred into the region of the profane; but elevating that hich had been profaned into its own proper region and place. ach region in turn supplies him with some new poetical aspect nder which to contemplate the very highest truth of all." And re one might take occasion to remark, that the wish to bring rward this fact has partly been the cause, during our different cursions, of many citations apparently heterogeneous, having en made from modern books of popular currency, which, as I served in the beginning, might otherwise be thought little itable for production in the kind of conversations that we ve been engaged in; for, besides that nearly every one deres to read those books, it must strike ordinary observers

that whoever takes up a position, however humble, at th present day, in defence of antiquity, ought to adopt the poli of the early Christian apologists towards the Gentile socie around them; and these books of the lower orders of our liter ture, which are now in every one's hand, correspond in son degree with those secular letters, and those works of geni among the Gentiles, which such men as Thomas, the bishop Alexandria, advised the Christians to study, in order to plea and win over their contemporaries. These are the orato poets, fabulists, and philosophers, that men of our times honou and it is while fearlessly citing and frankly praising su authors, where they deserve admiration, that one can be succeed in letting glide in, without the least exercise of a reprehensible art, the names and doctrines which can lead t recognition of that highest truth, towards which converge their scattered rays*. In brief, it is clearly an element of tellectual and ineffable peace, to possess a mental culture whi out of doors and in doors, satisfies both the heart and the und standing, both the imagination and the intelligence; which lights the poet in accordance with his reason, and confirms sage in his wisdom, without destroying his capacity to enjoy sensuous enjoyment of poesy; so that when the minstrel sin alluding to some adaptations divinely provided,

> "Let mass be said and trentals read
> When thou'rt to convent gone,
> And bid the bell of St. Benedict
> Toll out its deepest tone,"

you have not to renounce your philosophy to be pleased, when the philosopher and director speak, to sacrifice the pl sures of sense and imagination from a wish to agree with the for in truth we are supposing a state of mind which embra all advantages allotted to our intellectual being, and satisfies whole wants of our richly-endowed nature. Under other in ences you have often, as a great author says, "the preoccupat

* Galland, Bib. Vet. Pat. t. iii. St. Thomas, Episc. Alex., Ep ad Lucianum cubiculorum præpositum, ap. Broglie, L'Eglise et l'E pire, i.

of a false idea respecting the nobility of man, which mutilates him, puts him on a starving diet amidst the immensity of things, and prevents him from availing himself of all the generous forces which he truly possesses. All who object to this are denounced as realists; but," he continues, "whenever you are presented with an ideal, or what is called such, that is cold, monotonous, sad, colourless, under the pretension of dignity, cloudy, insipid, not brilliant and variegated as marble, but white as plaster, bloodless and pale, without fruitful sources, living on pure abstractions, rheumatic from head to foot—oh! do not mistake it for any thing that is vital." But under the Catholic system all is contrary to this false ideal. There you can breathe freely; and the human springs of action, the natural movements, are allowed to play with simple energy, and very distinctly before us, without the least prejudice to the fundamental religious fibre. In a word, the message brought by those whom the desire of serenity alone might invite us to follow, is more calm and gentle than the cool wind that breathes upon the flowers soft kisses in the spring.

> "You'll wish they were all voice, and to that
> Harmony chain your own soul for ever."

But it is not alone the mind, with all its alliances divinely formed, which needs a certain kind of culture in order that people should be able truly and thoroughly to enjoy serene hours; they have need also of a certain moral culture; and of this, however briefly, and inadequately, and perhaps inconsistently,—for here we are all, or at least most of us, dedulters,—there is a necessity for us now to speak, or rather listen.

Grave as the subject may seem, the ancients—not excepting even the Deipnosophists themselves, as we before remarked,—would not have deemed it unsuitable to the occasion we are supposing; for we find many instances of their introducing it on similar places and times; as when Pliny, speaking of Spurinna, says, "How agreeable! how delightful is the enjoyment of him in hours of privacy! You would fancy you were hearing some worthy of ancient times, inflaming your breast with the most heroic examples, and instructing your mind with the

most exalted precepts, which he delivers with so modest an ai
that it has not the least appearance of dictating." Moreover, th
subject is related, not alone to common life, but even to romanc
Without being frightened then overmuch, or called on to co
tract our brows, let us proceed to observe, with a view to ou
immediate object, the necessity of this moral culture.

An eminent French poet, in a recent work, has ventured t
introduce his readers within the solemn portal towards whic
such contemplations, as we propose to indulge in for a mome
here, will necessarily lead us. "The eye of the mind," he say
"can find nowhere more dazzling splendour, or more darknes
than in man." He might have referred his reader with go
effect to Butler's sermon on the character of Balaam. "N
thing," he continues, "more complicated, more mysterio
more immense, sometimes more terrible. There is a specta
greater than the sea—it is the sky. There is a spectacle great
than the sky—it is the interior of the soul. To write the po
of the human conscience, were it only that of one man or woma
were it only that of the lowest of men or of women, would be
resolve all epic poems into one supreme and definitive. T
conscience is a region of chimeras, cupidities, and attempts;
furnace of dreams, a cavern of ideas that one is ashamed of, t
pandemonium of sophisms, the battle-field of passions. At c
tain moments just try to look through the livid face of a hum
being who reflects on what is behind him. Pierce into th
darkness—try to see his soul. Under the exterior silence y
find a combat of giants as in Homer; the fight of dragons a
hydras, and clouds of phantoms, as in Milton; visionary spiri
as with Dante. Sombre mystery this infinity, which every ma
carries within himself, with which he measures the wishes of h
brain and the actions of his life*." Richard of St. Victor cites th
words, "Post finem dierum ego Nabuchodonosor oculos meos
cœlum levavi, et sensus meus redditus est mihi ..... et figu
mea reversa est ad me," and then continues as follows, "Th
figure is the exterior form of the body. Corporal discipline pe
tains to the exterior quality, as disposition of mind to the int
rior quality. His form, therefore, returns to him after havi

* Victor Hugo, tom. ii. 329.

ost it for a time through the absence of all discipline and of all eligion." In accordance with these words, one of our old dra-natists represents a convertite exclaiming,

"This love will give my soul another form."

How many men require a restoration thus of the human form! They almost make us waver in our faith, to hold opinion with Pythagoras, that souls of animals infuse themselves into the trunks of men. Only think of the part played by Renard and Isigrim, by the man Hog in sloth, and the man Ape in tricki-ness, by the man Fox in stealth, by the man Wolf in quickness, by the man Dog in madness, by the man Lion in prey! You need only to recur to your favourite novels to see it all exempli-fied. We are within the domain of even romance. How many Sybarites of superior minds, alas! in real life too like Rivarol, who, after being softened by dissipation, endeavour later to rise to grave subjects and to serious enterprises; who are worthy of succeeding by their intellectual force, but whose moral strength and heart, as a recent critic, when speaking of that celebrated improvisator, remarks, fail them.

"You hear every day," says Ruskin, "greater numbers of foolish people speaking about liberty, as if it were in all respects such an honourable thing; whereas it is an attribute of the lower creatures. The bee is more honoured than the butterfly. You will find, on fairly thinking of it, that it is his restraint which is honourable to man, not his liberty; for it is restraint which characterizes the higher creature, and betters the lower creature." It is with a man in the arrangement of his own personal government as with the people in establishing their national constitution. It is unsafe for either, as Bolingbroke says of the latter, "to keep too much power to themselves, unless they both want to have within them tyranny and anarchy at the same time." The thought, however, of any moral restraint arising from a positive and external authority, seems to some men of a sophistic turn, who, by the way, for a thousand reasons are very little disposed to join our excursionists, as an infringement on their birthright. Each would be free! as he calls it. "Free!" exclaims even a heathen poet, adding,

"—— sed si intus et in jecore ægro
Nascuntur domini ————."

"No, no," says the same poet elsewhere, "down with that! may live as I like:"

"—— Licet ut volo vivere, tolle.—
Stat contra ratio, et secretam gannit in aurem,
Ne liceat facere id, quod quis vitiabit agendo.
Publica lex hominum naturaque continet hoc fas,
Ut teneat vetitos inscitia debilis actus *."

The Pagan in this instance invokes the public law and t natural law, though falsely interpreted; but the public l reaches not the conscience, and the natural law may be oft thought a little ambiguous; as when the witty but shall knight, premeditating villainy, says, "If the young dace b bait for the old pike, I see no reason in the law of nature bu may snap at him." Here already is enough to justify the mark of Richard of St. Victor, saying, "Vide quam sit mira quamve horribile, hominem, humanitatis oblitum, homin exuere, et cor belluinum, imo plus quam belluinum, induc 'Omnia cornua peccatorum confringam †.'" "Horns," he co tinues, "grow from flesh, and become hardened so as no long to exhibit the sensibility of flesh. In ten ways the insol soul grows hardened thus, and loses sensibility of heart. three ways hardened against God, by arrogance, pride, and c tumacy; in three ways against itself, by custom, by obdurati and by emancipation from all restraint. And in four ways grows hardened against its neighbour, by disobedience, by sistance, by rebellion, and by the arrogation of power, when excuse itself it accuses God ‡." In these words you have as were the diagnosis of the moral deformities which are contrast in your novels and romances with the dispositions of the amiab the good, and the heroic. So that you see I am all this ti keeping my promise not to lead you too far from your o favourite haunts. That such belluine forms need a metam

* Pers. v. † Ps. lxxiv.
‡ De Gradibus Charitatis, iii. 15, 16—19.

phosis by means of culture, I suppose will be admitted; and remark, too, that those who wear them sometimes desire it; for an old poet seems to have hit off to the life one feature belonging often to their character, in supposing them still left conscious of their degradation:

> "Have they no thought of honour? some one asks.
> Yes, replies another, they do think
> Sometimes, but have not heart enough to pray;
> Some vapour now rises 'twixt them and heaven.
> They cannot see it: vice and ambition ruin'd them.
> They find their conscience too late; 'tis darksome,
> And full of stains. Oh! they have been so thoughtless,
> 'Twere almost impudence to ask a pardon;
> Yet, they will ask you, pity them. Survive
> All happy; and, if you can, forgive, forgive."

'These accents," the poet then concludes, "may be repentance." Besides, as a great thinker says, "it is an error to suppose that passion, even when pure and happy, conducts man to a state of rectitude according to the constitution of human nature, or even to that serenity which we invoke as an element of enjoyment." 'It leads," he says, "simply to a state of forgetfulness. In this state man forgets to be bad, but he forgets also to be good. Gratitude, duty, essential and importunate memories,—the sense of which must never be banished when men are in quest of what is here proposed, to mention nothing else,—fade away." From a thousand passages of this kind, taken at random, as we find them even in our lightest literature, one may infer the necessity of being subject to some degree of moral restraint arising from an authority higher than the public or than the natural law, which is liable to be misunderstood; and this, irrespective of more grave considerations, and viewing it in the interest only of our serene hours. "For impiety," says Richard of St. Victor, "is a sin, not of fresh water, but of water very salt, and very bitter, insomuch that than its bitterness there is nought more bitter. What sweetness, what freshness, pray, can be found in envy? Is anger sweet and fresh, think you? Is impatience sweet? 'Quid est tibi, mare, quod fugisti?' Ah,

it is faith which has made it pass away*." It is to this cultur that we can apply the line of Horace,

"Nemo adeo ferus est, ut non mitescere possit."

It is to the source from which it emanates that we may under stand him to be unconsciously directing us when he says,

"——————— at mihi cura
Non mediocris inest fontes ut adire remotos,
Atque haurire queam vitæ præcepta beatæ.

Incipe; vivendi recte qui prorogat horam,
Rusticus exspectat dum defluat amnis; at ille
Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum."

But then, perhaps, though St. Francis de Sales affirms it to b the maxim of theologians that "sin is only what is contrary t nature and contrary to reason†," you dread being led too ex clusively on a severe road, where it is understood as forbiddi many things that you do not yourself condemn or despise a contrary to nature or to reason. Perhaps, too, after what yo have been told, you feel very naturally somewhat afraid o austerity and superstition as associated with this culture, an invoke a life such as we desire, more elegant and independen You are under impressions perhaps similar to those of th great French critic, who, after citing a passage relative to th young Duc de Bourgogne, in which mention is made of bi observing days of abstinence, exclaims hastily, after the rapi manner of his countrymen, "Oh! we are no longer here amid the graces of Virgil under the tutorship of Fenelon. Th amiable Virgilian pupil has made place in growing up for th narrow-minded austere young man, the penitent of Père Ma tineau." Let the particular case be what it may, he seems t generalize rather groundlessly; for one does not exactly per ceive how an attention of this kind to the duties of the Christia discipline should be followed necessarily by such prosaic effect as he seems to suppose inevitable; nor is it very easy, when i

* De Exterminatione Mali.
† Serm. 18th Sunday.

is a question of finding a more free and even poetic culture than that supplies, to point out precisely the direction you should take to discover it. Of course, it is not difficult to suppose the Catholic mode of life to be associated with things disagreeable, and frivolous, and contemptible; but you can suppose any thing; and setting aside distorted views and exaggerations respecting it, we may very reasonably ask, where are you to find a happier condition? or one even more romantic, if that's what you like best? Is it with the ancient Gentile notions that you think to succeed? Why, these are against you point blank. For I would ask, has the culture we are speaking of, which will be found always tractable to any honest reason, been ever presented by Christian antiquity in sterner and less compromising terms than in these lines even of old Plautus, where in the Trinummus Philto says to his son, "The man who is struggling with his inclination, if it conquer him, it is all over with him; he is the slave of his inclination? But if he conquers his inclination, he truly lives, and shall be famed as a conqueror of conquerors. If you have conquered your inclination rather than your inclination you, you have reason to rejoice. 'Tis better by far that you should be such as you ought to be, than such as pleases your inclination. Those who conquer the inclination will ever be esteemed better and happier men than those whom the inclination subdues." It is a pagan, and not a Stoic either,—not a philosopher, but a writer of comic plays, who says all this. Whither will you now turn for your more elegant and independent life? And, we may add, that in speaking thus absolutely and without reserves or distinctions, the pagan has gone even beyond the frontiers which, we are told, the Christian discipline would mark down between you and what is a forbidden and hostile territory; for this latter line of demarcation infringes, we are assured, on no rights or just "inclinations" of our own. But how remarkable is the passage! Yet a thousand others might be adduced from the same sources of like import. Your compassion, then, for those who submit themselves to this authority, as the reed said to the oak, springs from good-nature, "mais quittez ce souci;" it is not wanted. The Chevalier Destouches was fond of Virgil. Fenelon wishing him to become a good Christian, says to him, in one of

his letters, "I need only send you, for that matter, to Horace to overthrow you. I want no other ally but him; for under the mask of his verses, I could teach you the precepts of a Christian life*." It was even an objection advanced by Julian, that there were no new precepts of morality in our religion. "Why, all the world," said he, "is agreed about these commandments†." So even Paganism would not serve your purpose. Neither would our polite literature, that at one time was but half Christian; for it is to the effects of this same Christian culture that we must refer those acknowledgments, offered in thankfulness for the serene moments resulting, which abound in our English dramatists at a period of our history when they were still mindful, and sometimes in spite of themselves, too, of the ordinary consequences of faith; as when Lord Fitzavarice says, after hearing Lady Peregrine,

> "——— I feel a holy flame
> About me. The corruption of my blood
> Is fallen away, and of that virtue which
> A devil in me would have betray'd, I rise
> A servant and admirer."

Or, as when Lady Bornwell exclaims,

> "——— Already
> I feel a cure upon my soul, and promise
> My after-life to virtue ———."

Or, as when Dichu says to the holy missionary, come to convert his nation,

> "I find a beam let into my dark soul.
> Oh, take me to your faith! here I give back
> Myself to serve your God."

Or, as when Emeria says to the same apostle,

> "You have quieted the tempest in my soul,
> And in this holy peace I must be happy."

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* Sainte-Beuve, Causeries du Lundi, ii.

† Jul. apud Cyrillum, p. 134.

Or, in fine, as when Carracus says,

> "Thanks unto heavens and thee, thou holy man,
> I have attain'd what doth adorn man's being,
> That precious germ of reason, by which solely
> We are discern'd from rude and brutish beasts,
> No other difference being 'twixt us and them."

Oh! certainly, a culture enforced with mercy and condescension by those vested in the solemn habit of a divine and strictly rational religion,—for what is most mysterious in that regard is most rational,—and as some one says of the manners that it requires, "la morale est la nature des choses," will ever possess an immense attraction for the human creature, and that, too, even in its most human enjoyments. Such a culture will ever be found in accordance, at the bottom, with what a great observer calls "the invisible currents of consciences." Love, and mercy, and sympathy, are ever at the bottom there; and so Callista, after reading St. Luke, on seeing Cæcilius, the Christian priest, enter her prison, sums up her petitions for being made a Christian with these words,—"Give me Him who spoke so kindly to that woman."

Nor, indeed, are examples wanting in this old literature which can show how greatly such influences must conduce to the serenity of all our hours. Take for example that charming portrait of her who had mind and power without being ever proud,

> "Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;
> Never lack'd gold, and yet went ever gay.
> Fled from her wish, and yet said—now I may."

We have indirect testimonies no less worthy of being noted, as when we read in the Tatler, "the country gentlemen were very much puzzled upon the case of a certain lover the other day; and never finding him riotous in their company, took him for a Roman Catholic." And Ben Jonson yields a similar instance in earlier times, for Kitely, in "Every Man in his Humour," speaking of Cash, says, "he can lend an oath, I promise you; he's no precisian nor rigid Roman Catholic; I have heard him swear." Nor should we pass unobserved those traits of the

effects of this discipline, which can be detected even in moments of its violation, as when poor Cassius, getting overpowered by the wine, says, "I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does these things.—Well, heaven's above all; and there be souls that must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved. For mine own part—no offence to any man—I hope to be saved." One does not exactly cite drunkenness as the agreeable effect of this culture, but it seems as if the inconsistency which must please can be traced to it. "Because I have committed one fault, that is no reason why I should be guilty of every other," replied a person that we read of in French history, when seen to keep Lent, and surprise was expressed at its being observed in such a quarter *. Human frailty is one thing; but a voluntary renouncement of all good thoughts, or a sarcastic way of disparaging what is of faith, in order to yield an anodyne to a sick conscience, is quite another; and it is as obviating this latter result that it seems to fall under our notice here.

And now, being arrived at these fountains, to which Horace, as we have seen, may be said to have looked wistfully, as so far distant from him,—since he invoked a rule of certainty which near them alone is found,—how can any one, however frivolous, pass on and leave wholly unnoticed the mysterious resource, unlike all injurious counterfeits, from experiencing which every one, like Juliet, is seen to return so cheerful and so serene? "For religion," says a great proficient in the natural sciences, "is a mother. You leave her at the first success: she waits for you at the first tear †." Who would have ever thought to find any of the advantages comprised in this resource pointed out by old Plautus? And yet some of them are described and invoked by him as if he had actually had personal experience of their efficacy, as when his Philoloches, in Mostellaria or the Haunted House, compares a man to a house; for he observes, "that men are too apt to blame the architect when the fault consists in the want of care in those to whom the house is entrusted; for, if the house is not looked after, it falls to decay necessarily; storms first break the tiles and gutters, then a careless owner takes no heed to put up others; consequently the rain gets in; the rafters

* Sainte-Beuve, Causeries du Lundi, i. † Cochin.

then rot, and the house falls by degrees to ruin. So it is," he continues, "with men; a little care, a little patching up now and then, keeps them sound and serviceable; but if never repaired after storms—and idleness is a storm,—after rain getting in—that is, vicious conduct,—after being soaked with the damp —that is, evil custom,—the man falls to ruin, becomes worthless, and perishes by degrees even from the foundation." After noticing this passage, I think we need hardly be surprised to hear expressed any where the proverbial wisdom, which says that "the pilot ought not for one leak in the poop to quit the helm, or the husbandman for one unthankful year to forsake the plough." Therefore, there will be nothing to astonish us if we hear of some resolution like that of Elsie in Longfellow's Golden Legend;

> "As soon as I see the earliest gray
> Of morning glimmer in the east,
> I will go over to the priest,
> And hear what the good man has to say."

Nor is even this all. The Emperor Marcus Antoninus, who is in such good odour with all philosophers, actually prescribes a daily examination of conscience. To be sure Brucker tells us it is wholly impossible to suppose that he was not well aware of the ways and doctrines of the Christians, but however that may be, the passage is express, and might be mistaken for a page fallen out of one of our religious manuals. "How have you acted, by word or deed, you are to ask yourself," he says, "towards heaven, towards your parents, your brothers, your wife, your children, your masters, your tutors, your friends, your companions, your servants*?" So this heathen philosopher would actually send you, as far as he knew the way, to the confessional. What a "Romanist" the fool was! The old English dramatists, who can hardly be supposed in league to deceive posterity on this head, are unanimous in representing the beneficial consequences that generally attend a walk in that direction. Fernando, in the Brothers, seeing the confessor come from the room of his dying father departing to the next world, it was feared, remorseless and unforgiving, says,—

* Lib. v.

"There's something in that face looks comfortably."

To whom the priest replies, with the simple unassuming air of one sure of his own mission,

"I did apply some lenitives to soften
His anger, and prevail'd; your father hath
Reversed that heavy censure of his curse,
And in the place bequeath'd his prayer and blessing."

Fernando, thus relieved, expresses all his grateful sense of what he had now so happily recovered, saying,

"And I that groan'd beneath the weight of that
——— sunk almost to despair,
Where night and heavy shades hung round about me,
Found myself rising like the morning star
To view the world."

Aimwell evinces the same impressions, saying,

"Thou hast entranced me with thy language. Laden
With my despairs, like a distressed bark,
I gave myself up lost in the imagined
Tempest; but at point of striking
Upon a rock, what a celestial gale
Makes my sails swell with comfort! and enforcing
My ship into the channel, I do feel it
Bound on the waves, discretion at the helm,
Which passion had forsaken."

Such, attested even by our light dramatic literature, are the common daily effects produced by what has met our observation here; which may be compared to the task of skilful gardeners, who

"——————— root away
The noisome weeds, that without profit suck
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers,
And lop away superfluous branches,
That bearing boughs may live."

"Where this is done, each man living bears a crown,
Which waste of idle hours would have thrown down."

Some are now exclaiming against this discipline, of which they experimentally know nothing; but though every lapse of ours will by them be called its work and the error of those ad-

ministering it, these former positive effects are the consequences resulting from it, which seem to exemplify the justice of what Clariana says, for I will only view it through the eyes of our old seers who had no experience of intrigues that later have crept in, that

> "———— wounds which are made
> Require a balsam, and not empty curses,
> To salve our body. Should the mariner,
> When a storm meets him, throw away his card,
> Neglect himself and vessel, and lie down
> Cursing the winds and tempests?"

It pleased Julian, when he was attacking Christianity by his pen, and defending Paganism with his imperial power, to be very facetious on the subject of the sacramental remission of sins, which theme he introduced into a little work that he composed for the Saturnalia in the form of a drama; and in these later times, above all in Ireland, he has had many very solemn-looking men if not wearing as long a beard as his own, to contract exactly his way of thinking and of speaking with respect to the same matter. There are people now who would deprive those falling or fallen through human frailty of such means for recovering serenity of mind, some of them saying with Slicer, in his old play of "The Ordinary," "Confession is one slip to weakness; private conscience is a theatre to valour." If they are not in a position to act like the Italian general at Somma, who had his prisoners shot without confession, saying, "they will confess under ground," they would substitute, perhaps, a kind of penal discipline within every house, that makes life itself a burden; or they would merely trust to that system of penitentiary privations which they do not think to be torture, for the reason that they draw no blood. But, as the same poet says,

> "———— If all that in this kind
> Have sinn'd had met with such a fate, you would
> Not find some names, that now shine gloriously,
> Within the catalogue of saints."

Those who know least about this matter are the foremost to suspect. Some eloquent and even romantic writers suggest the

possibility of a bad administration of what they theoretically admire, but it is singular that in the instance to which I allude, without naming the foreign but well-known author who produces it, the personal experience cited to justify such distrust, is only an example to prove that the administration, in that particular case, was exactly what it ought to have been. Some, again, comprehend in their view of the ancient institution, a mere unauthorized parody, the result of a personal whim, though well intentioned. But others, who see the thing itself, and not its counterfeit, whether the latter be sanctioned or illegal, need not these warnings. Cervantes, in his tale of Rinconete and Cortadillo, represents one of the gang of thieves saying, "As for restitution, no one can oblige us to it, for none of us ever go to confession." Experience even leads to testimonies of similar import from living witnesses, coming forward both as poets and as men the least to be suspected of any predisposition in its favour, as when we read in Evangeline,

> "So a celestial brightness,—a more ethereal beauty,—
> Shone on her face and encircled her form, when, after confession,
> Homeward serenely she walked with God's benediction upon her."

And as when Henri Heine, speaking of his own marriage, says, in order to account for his choice, "The woman of the old faith has an appreciable advantage over another who follows a different discipline. Has the former committed a fault? she goes to confession, and returns to the house in good humour. As for the other, under similar circumstances, she grows peevish, melancholy, and bad-tempered, and so every thing else around her in the house turns sour." "But what signifies all this," we hear your satirical philosopher, or man of Calvin's robe, exclaim, as if he were referring to the very individual who happens to be speaking now for us all; "what is the use of their discipline in the end, when there is nothing certain or permanent in these conversions as you call them, which so seldom are without relapses? Where were you yourself," he asks; "yes, you, my fine penitent?" a few evenings perhaps after the festival that you have just been describing so eloquently. "Where was I?" replies the poor street musician of Jules Janin, "I was in my old haunts, like a coward as I was, singing with the rest of them.

But you! Oh, how strong you are because I am weak! how triumphant because I have been overcome! Well, cowardice for cowardice at least, I have had over you the great advantage and the rare honour of having believed and repented for three days. I felt the glory, and I profited by the victory. Ah, you unhappy philosopher, counting for nothing one moment of grace and repentance! and not knowing that it suffices often to save an immortal soul!" And, accordingly, the moral which this author draws in the extraordinary book from which I am speaking, is the verification of these very words, showing the happy death of this poor street wanderer, calling in the priest, "than whom a real martyr could not bear on his front a greater air of conviction, of honour, of energy, and of authority," inviting him to choose for his song now, mercy and judgment! to forgive and to be forgiven. And so this author goes on to relate how here, instead of a philosopher in the false sense of the word, and an "esprit fort," was found a mind weak and believing, not a hardened miserable reprobate, settled down in a state of final impenitence, but a Christian and an humble one. So he tells all his poor jealousies as an artist, and all his natural resentments for the ingratitude he has so often experienced; and to be sure his confessor has some trouble to quiet him on that point; but he does quiet him, and so he forgives the ungrateful wretch, and this person and that, and not only his chief enemy, but all his subalterns; he regrets all his retorts and outrages in return, and he expires in peace, a true and contrite penitent, though still in moments of delirium pronouncing the names that music had endeared to his imagination. "Monsieur Diderot," said the confessor, turning to that philosopher who happened to be present, "Sir," he said, raising himself up when all was over, and by the way the young priest was six feet high, "Lo! a soul rescued from your evil genius. To the end this poor vagabond never doubted either the justice that avenges, or the wisdom that rules, or the goodness that pardons! he had the instinct to feel assured that he alone is wise who knows where to proceed and where to stop. Poor outcast, he was not one of the insane men who draw near to God by their intelligence, and depart from Him through their pride. Unlike your great philosophers, he did not pretend to have an immense idea! he was humble,

and lo! now that is what saved him. Ah, Monsieur Diderot, you were to be only like him, simple, one of the poor in spirit There is still time. Only there is not much more for you lose; call for me, Monsieur Diderot: I shall be always at you orders. Thus died," adds Jules Janin, "the greatest artist of h age, and, I rather fear, the best philosopher of my time."

But to proceed. I dread, however, to take another step in th direction. The ground becomes thrice holy; for we are no the very brink of the source from which the true sereni emanates for man. Thus much however we may venture utter in regard to it. There is a mysterious bond that uni in a peace that passes all understanding, those who are subm sive to this order of truth, all over the world—a bond of ineffa tenderness, yet strong enough to defy the universe, were it attempt openly to burst it. This bond, which in itself is great mystery of peace to the human heart, is formed at t altar—at the communion rail—yes, even so. Here is the sou of pure serenity, for youth and age, for children and men, both sexes, for all ranks, all conditions, and for all the nati of the whole earth alike. Men may not see it, and what truly wonderful, even those whom it embraces may not often conscious of its existence, so lightsome is it and ethereal, and it were, part of their own nature, while sweet as the breat summer dawn, or the fragrance of a flower; but let it be ope outraged, on a single point of the globe, by any of the wor file, and then even from the midst of what is intended to cr it, from mourning, and desolation, and humiliation, and what more, even out of an apparent abandonment by God, there rises "in locum refugii," a bright roseate cloud, of fair beloved fo of the living and the dead, into which the bruised souls ret to hide themselves amongst those revered and loved ones, say of the Almighty Father, "though He slay me, yet will I tr in Him;" and there in that profound secrecy, in that mysteri union, in that inviolable peace, will they pray for their revil and cherish that love of one another, which, with the pri love of God producing it, will be their felicity for ever.

But let us retrace our steps and continue to glance at mat that belong more properly to the sphere of common obser like ourselves.

Independent of such positive ordinations, we may say, then, that there are certain wide comprehensive principles for the regulation of life emanating from the same source, and closely allied with those provisions for purely intellectual health already noticed, which ought to attract persons who are on this quest by their singular and subtle adaptation to promote serene hours. "We move," says Lacordaire, taking a general view of them, and don't let us be frightened by its gravity, for it can be made very popular and accessible to ourselves, and it is quite to the present purpose—"We move in two spheres, that of nature and that of grace, but both have the Word, Son of God for author and for guide. That is why the Church has never renounced the defence of reason. She has always held it for a portion of her inheritance; and recently she has proclaimed its rights against those who, through an ill-regulated ardour, thought to exalt faith by sacrificing to it the other light of our understanding. Enter then on the spacious way which alone is the true way. Do not make of Jesus Christ, our Master, an exception to the general course of things, or of the Church a small society lost in the midst of ages and of nations, or of faith an obscure lamp shining in only a few privileged souls, or, in fine, of the Christian life, an existence which has relation only to itself, and which protests against all things ordained and existing around us. No; this is the theme of our enemies, not our theme. Children of God, the world is the habitation of our bodies, its age from man's creation the measure of our days, the human race the companion—the theatre of our destinies*." You don't, perhaps, perceive the tendency of such views, or how they bear directly upon our subject, but a moment's reflection will enable you to discern it; for surely all this speaks such sense that our sense breeds with it; surely it looks like finding what most certainly our serenest hours need, namely, a wisdom sufficiently well accommodated to popular acquiescence, to what can be appreciated by young men and women, and by "the lower" orders in general, and the illiterate, as well as by the old, and the highest, and the most learned. Surely this is to have found a voice that gives a very echo to the seat where love is throned,

* Lettre à un jeune Homme.

a discipline which, as Coleridge says of one of the greatest literary teachers ever given to the world, "follows the main march of the human affections, fostering the sweet yet dignified feeling of all that continuates society with a purity unassailable by sophistry, because it rests not in the analytic processes, but in that same equipoise of the faculties during which the feelings are representative of all past experience,—not of the individual only, but of all those by whom he or she has been educated and their predecessors from the beginning *." This argues our having found a discipline which, as M. de Sacy says of Christianity in general, "destroys not the natural light, that light which enlighteneth every man coming into this world, but which takes it for its point of departure, and which obtains an assent that is voluntary." While telling us besides, in the very words ascribed to her own confessor by a celebrated French woman, "never to fear when it is our heart that counsels us, for that the heart is never wrong,"—one may see, at the same time, what this admirable writer does not appear, perhaps, to discern with quite sufficient clearness, that to breathe more freely under this discipline we have no need, as some pretend, "to touch the soil of antiquity, however luminous be that soil," and as he calls it, "that country of strong minds masters of themselves;" for it is clear that under this banner, later unfolded in all its majesty, men can be natural without returning to that region of ambiguous merit, and free with no other aid but what is furnished after all in greatest perfection by the principle which this vast and truly regal standard represents, under which so many are enabled to say of themselves, with Balzac, that "from the first they have been what they are now, that they were bred up with a great reverence for holy things and persons, so that, without much mistake as to dates, they might reckon this disposition of theirs among their natural inclinations." Now I should like to know whether these are not very important results to stumble upon, while seeking to show how serenity requires an acquiescence in the ancient religion of Christendom. We heard just now of society being mined in a destructive way by evil under various forms, and in different

* Lit. Remains, ii.

degrees of intensity. Well, there is another side of the medal, for so are all things that pervert and afflict it mined. Hypocrisy, undue gravity, unsound pretensions, the ways of fanaticism, illegitimate authority—all these are mined. And by whom? By children, by boys and girls, somewhat fast, perhaps, but no matter; by the unsophisticated, and by manhood and womanhood, when free from the thraldom of base, interested motives, springing from a mistake as to what self-love requires. Yes, it is even so; all these things are in point of fact mined by thousands around you, and often without your knowing it. For please to take note, that youth, and unlettered simplicity, honour and generosity of nature, have all of them a certain private code and tradition of their own, handed down somewhat on the sly, perhaps, though nothing is more true and just than that code; and it must be a great step towards arriving at absolute certainty with regard to the truth and value of a system, when we discover that its principles and maxims square with this secret law, and may be offered to the human heart, as it were, clothed in the very garb of youth, and in the very language that belongs to all these confederates, though it were to be heard only from "the poor girl." There is no one, as a holy writer says, to whom it is not delightful to act and think according to the propensity and nature of his mind; and we have now discovered that the practice and the thoughts of this ancient religion recommend themselves naturally, as it were, to the affections of the young and generous, as in the instance of the compassion and liberality to every one which it prescribes, and of the general character for noble goodness which it builds up, causing those who possess it to become, as the same conspirators say, "regular bricks;" and to be loved in consequence by all who know them, or even hear of them, as when Sidonius Apollinaris wrote to a friend, saying, "every one likes you, every one desires your company; every one has something to say in your commendation." I repeat it—these results, let our grave ones say what they like, are remarkable and important.

In point of fact, what strikes most thoughtful persons when they first approach this whole subject, is not the praises it receives from advocates professionally pleading for it, but the effects it

produces in those who know nothing about such orators; it i
not the field which it supplies for a restless and suspiciou
analysis, a criticism which, as was remarked elsewhere, suppose
it to be only another matter for study, and for interminable dis
cussions,—it is not the food that it yields for polemics, tha
pasture of curiosity,—it is not the fact of its gratifying a
archæological passion, and furnishing an instruction addresse
to mental inquisitiveness, a scientific teaching whereby other
may be persuaded, puzzled, or silenced, and that, perhaps, onl
to please the malice of some one who doubts himself of ever
thing;—no, what strikes them is the adaptation of this whol
system to our wants and to our nature, as seen in the people, i
the popular heart, the popular usage and tradition, constituti
the general human heart, the general custom and knowledge
the human race. Catholicity, acting on the common feelin
of human nature, produces millions of social harmonies, charm
ing pictures in every-day life, in young and old, and in bo
sexes, combinations of different ways appropriate to each con
tion, and an interchange of duties which furnish a spectacle th
is not unworthy of an angel to behold, and which you wi
never find realized in the same variety and freshness where
does not reign as the religion of a whole people—as the resu
not of convictions late in life, separately and painfully worke
out, the fruit of philosophic demonstrations, but of a gener
belief accredited by mothers, and nurses, and teachers of t
first catechism. We may add that, what strikes thoughtf
persons most, is its adaptation also to the aspirations of th
man who is wisest and best, "cui nihil alienum," as Nicholas
Clairvaux says, "nisi quod virtuti incongruum erat." H
remarkable is it to hear such a testimony as that of Mada
Swetchine, for instance, when writing to the Princess Ale
Galitzin she says, "This day is the anniversary of the sole d
of my life, for which I should have wished to be born. It
this day twenty-two years since, by the grace of God, I belong
to his Church. During these twenty-two years, never h
there been a minute, or even a second, in which the thought
this miracle of mercy has not excited in me an equal moveme
of gratitude, and of happiness, and of superhuman joy!" And w
that has ever followed the same road with her degree of inte

gence, even though without her consistency of conduct, would not be prepared to say as much? Some few philosophers, they are few in comparison with others less noisy and pretentious, turn elsewhere to seek what is difficult, abstruse, complicated, rationalistic, as the phrase is,—certainly not addressed to the heart or to the whole nature of man; while they seem to prefer ideas that admit of no tangible shape in the way of development, and no effective result as to human happiness; ideas painfully elaborated, that are after all misty, or in a state of vapour; but the mass of mankind, with the crowd of obscure deep thinkers, heed them not; and the reason is, that "the mechanism of the human heart," as a famous author remarks, "when you thoroughly understand it, is, like all the other works of nature, very beautiful, very wonderful, but very simple. When it does not work well, the fault is not in the machinery, as originally designed, but in the management." Now, if you seek in the right sources for it, we have proof for eighteen centuries that it is the process here referred to which involves its right management, and therefore is it said from on high, "sapientiam sanctorum narrent populi." Accordingly, to this day, aye, and even here in England, our boys and girls, our mechanics, and our labourers, are ready to raise their voices in its praise, if you only show it to them as it is in truth. It is still "narrent populi." Yes, in their workshops or in their garrets, it is they who speak of the simplicity, and goodness, and wisdom of those who have faith; for, in fact, the state of things in this respect has returned to be what it was with the Gentiles in the primitive ages of the Church, namely, as the Prince de Broglie remarks, the poor who suffer hardships, and the great who have recognized from experience the insufficiency of riches and greatness, those who have no chance of being ever what we term well off in the world, and those who are tired of the results of being so, are the first to appreciate a religion which is concerned with the happiness of a future life. The middle ranks, condemned to earthly cares, but sustained by the sharp appetite of gain, are the least favourable to it *.

But to return to our immediate subject. People need, then,

* L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain au IVe Siècle, tom. i. 157.

for our general purpose, most assuredly a certain moral cultur which demands no extraordinary development of the intelligenc to be received and practised. They need, what Balzac says h so greatly likes, "that popular theology which comes half-wa to meet us, and stoops a little that we may not be obliged t stand upon our toes to reach it; which follows the example o its Author, who was familiar with the people, and disdained n one, not even harlots and publicans." Men desire to hav thoughts emanating from such moralists as those with whom as De Sacy says, speaking of M. de Latena, "one would like t live," which implies, he thinks, their finding a thing rare in th world of literature and science; for, he says, he delights in L Bruyère, but he would be sorry to expose himself to his pe he admires Pascal, but he would not like to be a victim to h penitential severity. He would be glad to have met Montaign but to have been his companion,—no, professing, as he doe egotism under too flimsy a disguise. "Moralists," he conclude alluding to such men, "may be at times good to read, perhap but one should seldom see them. There is a crust of dryne and of hardness about them, and an insulting pride which revol the soul."

In fine, men in general, and especially if the race of goo fellows is to be perpetuated, need principles that contravene n the divine ideal, on submission to which their serenity, as we as their best worth, depends,—principles that do not distort int a minute and partial development of one good quality the whol grand scheme of human life in accordance with that archetyp "God is the poet," says Balzac, "and men are only the actors These dramas, great and little, which are played upon the earth have been composed in heaven, and it is often only a sort o puppet that enacts Atreus or Agamemnon." It is the sam with us on the little private stage of common life. Actors, then as men are, their peace depends on their not assuming the poet' office, and changing, and misapplying, and perverting what the have to say and to perform. It should be remembered that a we have not all the same part to play, so neither should the in equalities and varieties of our respective dispositions, morally considered, be assimilated to one unvarying mould and conven tional form; and accordingly, in point of fact, what is very

remarkable, "individuality," not indeed as leading to eccentricity or to culpable actions, but "as one of the elements of well-being," was never more developed than during the middle ages, when all Europe was united in one faith; while it is amidst the countless sections of religion consequent upon its renouncement that this individuality is now every where diminished, so as to appear in danger of perishing altogether. Within the limits which common sense, the sentiment of the common people, and perhaps above all the instinct of womankind, would prescribe, every one would have been of the opinion of a recent author in esteeming individuality of character a great good; for monotony and absolute sameness are not more contrary to the evident design of the Creator than they are to the pleasures of social life. Besides, in regard actually to the well-being of all collectively, the distinctive character of each member is in some respects necessary. "There is nothing," as Cicero says, "which does not seem to contain in itself many dissimilar parts which are worthy of equal praise. It is so in nature, where we have the pleasure of the ears, and eyes, and other senses, all unlike, and yet one. It is so in art, as in painting, in poetry, and in oratory, all embracing different styles or types, and all alike admirable." It is so in life under this divine comprehensive influence; and an attempt to decry capriciously one element at the expense of another, while in contravention of what this universality demands, would, as we before observed in the region of mind, be at total variance with the object of those who desire peace and contentment, and, as it were, to fulfil, with quiet and honest submission to authority, the engagement which they contracted on coming upon the stage of life. Such persons must keep to the old traditional views of morals which, as the Père Boutauld says, "suppose the passions to be from God, and only their excess from the sin of the first man*,"—views which embrace the whole of life's drama, disdaining not even to sanction the thought of poor Aurelia in our old play, when she says, with such homely earnestness, as if sending a valentine, "I would advise you like a good Christian lover," seeing, with great discretion, not the

* Les Conseils de la Sagesse, 89.

least incongruity the while in such a combination of terms; and it will be found ultimately, though heaven knows it is not for us to point it out, that the way to make people, not alone susceptible of serene enjoyment, but also truly and in the secret recesses of their mind religious, which is the result after all most conducive to that end, is to let them thus play out their respective parts with a view to the whole of human life; for then the words of Tacitus will be verified,—"Nec tam voces illæ, quam virtutis concentus videntur." At present, perhaps, we are apt to be rather dull, suspicious, and subdued in consequence of our hearing, day after day, only voices which, as the same Tacitus says of some, "affect above all asperity of sound," —voices besides that perhaps exclusively appeal in the highest sphere of thought to man's order, which, as a great author observes, "is near and finite, distinct, and irrespective sometimes of the Maker's order, which is remote, infinite, and beyond man's comprehension even of what is order." But at these higher voices, as Leonato says to Juliana,

> "———— we will awake
> From this our sullen sleep, and quit of those
> Sick feathers that did droop our wings, fly to
> The fountain stream, whose charm shall perfect us,
> And chain our amorous souls."

And, after all, the tendency of this moral culture, in spite, or rather, perhaps, we should say, in consequence of its restraints, is to grant at last, in a certain sense, almost a universal dispensation; for its effect is gradually and ultimately to assimilate people's tastes, their desires, their inclinations, and their actions, to the divine ideal; and then they will love only what they ought to love, desire only what they were intended to obtain, and do what it is for their true interest even in this life to perform. "Happy," exclaims Richard of St. Victor, "the citizens of that state 'cujus participatio in id ipsum.' All rivers," he continues, "enter the sea which is bitter, and all lower delights end in bitterness. Grief will mix with laughter, and sorrow occupy the extremes of joy, as all fresh water descends to the salt bitter sea, and becomes bitterness. For the world passes and its concupiscence; and we know that not without

grief is lost what was possessed with love inordinate. How much better then is it 'quæ sursum sunt sapere, quæ sursum sunt quærere,'—to drive back to its fountain the waters of the Jordan! Who would not despair of being able to stay the impetus of such a river, and direct it back to the mountains? What a thing to achieve! That rapid and impetuous flood of human affection to restrain and direct backwards! There is," he says in conclusion, "an art by which this can be effected*." And yet, already some will be able to anticipate the time that is to come when, as he proceeds to suggest, "this art itself may be unlearned as no longer necessary, and when words will change their meaning; when all this that was called chastising, and mortification, and self-denial are no more needed; when we shall hear no more, Love not the world, for there will be an earth that cannot harm us; when the creature will be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the sons of God; when yet the beauty of the creature will be incomparably greater, and corporeal delights sweeter, and nearer, and more pleasant; when the mind will be enraptured, both within and without, with spiritual and with bodily things, when it will go in and out and find pastures. Then the waters of Jordan will return into their bed, and flow as before. Nothing already some can please, as nothing then will please any one, but what is lawful,—'nihil libebit nisi quod licebit.' Therefore the prophet invokes the time when votive things will be pleasant things, when conjoined for ever will be vows and consents, sentences and concupiscences, judgments and desires, voluntary and obligatory things, so that what pleases from deliberation will please through delight, and those only please through delight which are allowed from deliberation; when the Jordan will have its free course, and all human affections revolve in one serene pleasure without any contradiction, the highest spiritual things agreeing with the lowest exterior things. Unless I am deceived," he concludes, "these waters, which before swelled, will now return to their channel with a greater impetus, and will spread wider, and exceed the bounds of their former limits; for the love of creatures will find greater food for its nourish-

* ii. c. 1.

ment, and will therefore flow onwards with more fulness and peace*."

But these, it must be admitted, are the sublimities of the high mystic school, which it becomes us, perhaps, vocally neither to interpret nor apply; and yet they force us into a presentiment, as Coleridge says, "however dim, of a state in which these struggles of inward free will with duty shall be reconciled and solved." When Tasso wrote the celebrated ode in his Aminta on the Golden Age, the crown of all pastoral aspiration, beginning,

"O lovely age of gold!
Not that the rivers roll'd
With milk, or that the woods wept honey-dew,"

all that he did, notwithstanding Guarini's accusations, was to express a wish that the state thus anticipated by the holy Canon of St. Victor might be realized,—"that duty and inclination," as the eloquent English commentator on his ode observes, "could be more reconciled than they are," as in that ideal time when a contradicting ordinance

"——— had not come to fret
The sweet and happy fold
Of gentle human kind;
Nor did its hard law bind
Souls nursed in freedom; but that law of gold,
That glad and golden law, all free, all fitted,
Which nature's own hand wrote—What pleases is permitted."

Returning, however, to what is more proper for such ears as ours, and to hear of things that conduce to the realization, in a safe and ordinary manner, of our project, it is certain that the principles here spoken of do already produce in man effects that, independent of all other and higher considerations, are to be desired, and in some degree or other at least required, by those who would enjoy thoroughly, and without self-delusion, a serene hour.

It falls not to our province to notice the historical results

* De Exterminatione Mali, ii. 19.

when positive institutions, framed in the interest of serenity, and intended but for an exceptional portion of mankind, gave to the world, for instance, and to speak only of France, Saint-Denis and Suger, Cluny and Peter the Venerable, Clairvaux and St. Bernard, Marmoutiers and Mabillon, the Oratory and Malebranche, Saint-Lazare and St. Vincent de Paul; names, whether of places or of men, which cannot be uttered by any one possessing the least tincture of letters, without his being impressed as if he heard sung Parnell's hymn,

> "Lovely, lasting peace of mind!
> Sweet delight of human kind!
> Heav'nly born, and bred on high,
> To crown the fav'rites of the sky
> With more of happiness below
> Than victors in a triumph know!
> Whither, O whither art thou fled
> To lay thy meek, contented head?"

Before the charm of many of our popular writers some may experience at times a distrust of their own previous appreciations of such things; and therefore it is certainly not irrelevant and not without a sense of intimate contentment, when we take note of their incidental testimony, extorted as it would seem occasionally by a personal experience that is all the more impressive from its being so evidently independent. "I have said it," writes, for instance, a celebrated French novelist; "but I will repeat it once more now that I am about to bury this dream of the cloistral life in my distant but for ever tender memories. The life in community with beings sweetly amiable, and sweetly loved, is the ideal of happiness. Affection lives by preferences; but in this kind of fraternal society, when a common faith serves for bond, preferences are so pure and holy that they augment instead of exhausting the sources of the heart. It is often said that a noble passion enlarges the soul. What nobler passion than that of the Christian brotherhood? I felt myself living with all my vitality in this enchanted state. I have felt myself ever since I left it perishing day by day, hour by hour, and without being able to render to myself an account of what was wanting to me; and while seeking distraction in the amuse-

ments which seemed suitable to my years, I experienced in my thoughts a fearful void, a disgust, a weariness of all things around me, and of all persons." But we must not digress. It is well, however, to have noticed this remarkable attestation to the justice of our opinion, that such places and such persons belong to the history of serene hours. We must confess, too, that it would be but natural, on hearing such names, to feel somewhat amazed and abashed at one's own presumption in having ever conceived the thought of taking up a pen to write about serene hours under any form; since, when witnessed in connexion with such characters and places, there seems to be no possibility of separating them from what is beyond and above us at an immeasurable distance; though at the same time I am inclined to defy any one who has ever with the ordinary feelings of humanity visited Carnaldoli or Vallembrosa to sit and read on a few rocks in a fir-grove and inhale its odour, and not look back on those scenes, and the men he saw there, with a suspicion for at least five minutes that the place marked out for himself by nature was at their side. But there are degrees in all things, and therefore I suppose any one may be allowed to speak of serene hours in their lowest circle, as passing in a common elementary way within the domains of ordinary life. Misconceptions, however, on this point ought not to be indulged in even through this very just and proper estimate of one's own position amongst the multitude with whom, in wants and inclinations, if not in all good qualities, one is associated. It is the remark of Lacordaire, that what distinguishes the modern religious views opposed to Catholicity, is not the alteration or denial of this or that doctrine. The system that embraces them would subsist even when all symbols of the Church were accepted; for it is in its essence not so much an error or a confluence of errors, as it is a deep passion of hostility to the priesthood, a desperate effort to dispense with man in the relations of the soul to God. But on what mistaken, and unchristian, and shallow notions does this premature aversion rest? Let us only glance at that part of the subject which concerns us here.

The ancient principles, then, of which we are attempting to seize the aggregate result, seem to involve of themselves no needless separation between Christians. Priests, to some of

whom allusion has just been made, do not seem to constitute a caste according to the notions of Asiatics; but, however exalted and set apart for the general good, a part of the population. And by the way, one may often observe, too, that no men appear to dislike needless distinctions, and above all what is termed craft, in connexion with their order, more thoroughly than they do. "Youth," at all events as Lacordaire desired, "is generally able to find in the priest the man, or, in other words, a heart sensitive to what youth loves, and capable of understanding its generous passions. It wishes," as he says, "that the priest should set a certain value on friendship, patriotism, courage, freedom, and honour. It does not like to be told that these are profane chimeras, unworthy of occupying the heart of a Christian, and things not to be spoken of at the feet of God. It does not like to meet one who proposes a religion that ignores such things, preaching a piety that is founded on the ruins of the heart, and of reason too for that matter*." Accordingly, it feels drawn towards priests of the Catholic Church, who are found to correspond with the type that it admires,—found to be men knowing all the languages of all interests, and speaking them too; and in point of fact, of whatever is common and open, free and honourable, generous and devoted, sensible, of good report, and in accordance with the taste and genius of their respective countries in the age they live in, they are pretty generally found to be the steady advocates, and often too, as all history and experience prove, when emperors and republics will permit, the most remarkable actors. Foes generally, as we have always understood them, and as no doubt the vast majority always are, to secret meddling with the stability of families, to every thing unreasonable in the way of taking an undue advantage of any position,—men in whom you can place unlimited confidence, as incapable of pursuing a spiritual object by means that are not open as day; humane and honourable, they were welcome to each house in the most natural way possible, as its true and disinterested friends. How could any one, however silly through long confinement to some exclusive idea, suppose that it was not possible or probable that we should fall in with

* Lettres de Lacordaire, p. 6.

some of them gone out for the day, like any of us, during the whole season of our summer excursions? The fact is, that, like the Argonauts, we have often on board with us not only "some that are of a consummate prudence, and skilled in all kinds of art," but also some one consecrated to the divine service,—a priest. True, we cannot treat the latter always quite like others; though to beguile the wise folks, young folks lay their heads together, needs must the idle ones obey. Therefore we must have submission. We may have to wait or to hurry when it is a question of having their company; for they will say at times,

> "The evening air grows dusk and brown;
> I must go back into the town,
> To visit beds of pain and death,
> Of restless limbs and quivering breath,
> And sorrowing hearts, and patient eyes
> That see, through tears, the sun go down,
> But never more shall see it rise.
> The poor in body and estate,
> The sick and the disconsolate,
> Must not on man's convenience wait *."

Even that is not all. Let the excursion be prolonged for two days, as it will sometimes, even on the Thames, and there will be interruptions from time to time to which you must give way. Have we forgot the Breviary? I should think not. On the green bank, or in the garden, or at the weir, or under the poplars, we shall see our friend retire with his book. First for Prime, on our way perhaps from Richmond, when stopping to take rest at Kingston, while the rising sun gilds with his beams the woods of Bushy Park; then for Tierce at Sunbury Lock, waiting to get through it, which is not one of the quickest in its operations. Sext will see him again at Penton Hook, while we are preparing for a swim across the river, in which he will not follow later beyond a short distance from the bank. He will be saying Nones a little beyond Chertsey Meadows, just as you catch the last view of the old abbey, or rather of the little that remains of that venerable house where the murdered Henry

* Longfellow.

was entombed, and where from the seventh to the sixteenth century used to be sung in choir the very words that our friend has now, in the nineteenth age from Christ, been saying to God and to himself. Vespers and Complin will call him aside slily at Egham Lock, when we don't much care to disturb the silence, being now rather tired of rowing, and of talking too for that matter; in fine, after arriving at the Five Bells at Ouzeley, where we hardly know what to do with ourselves while dinner is getting ready, you will see him, already having strolled far away under the shade of the wood, saying Matins and Lauds before he again joins us. Ah! well, grumble who may, I do assure you, as a French author says in a book of which I will not give you the title in order to render him a service; for he is my valued friend in spite of it, the mere sight of this Breviary thus repeated has done us all good, and contributes to the peaceful enjoyment of the days that we spent together. These prayers, murmured secretly, without our knowing exactly their purport, this renewed contemplation from dawn till dusk, with intervals of active service at the helm, at the lock, every where, and of joyous gaiety, communicating itself to every heart; this book, which has followed him in the boat along with our cornet and our carpet-bags, which has charmed the hours of his navigation, which has so often consoled him elsewhere in sorrow, and cheered when amongst us his brightest hours; which has accompanied him on the sunny meadow with the larks and grasshoppers, and by the shady palisade of the stately park,—take all our words for it, these are great pleasures at little cost, always new and never dangerous, a study without ambition and without regrets, an amiable science, which has not chilled the joy, or blighted the blossom, or disenchanted the fairy pleasures of our serenest hour. Of course, as just noticed, he had his pauses and his delays, his retreats managed as he could, and his returns later than we often wished them to be. But, if you except a little vociferation and chaffing on our part, to which it may have led, supposing such pastime somewhat wrong, was any one of us the worse for it all? And then, again, to speak in general of these men so unlike ourselves; notwithstanding all this solicitude, it is often one of them who, if he does not actually first conceive the idea of the trip, and arrange the

whole plan of it,—for juvenile wits are apt to get the start of them in that direction,—at least obtains permission for it, and takes an active part in it; while, wherever any of them is present, we can count upon having a free and cheerful companion, an indulgent and a wise one too. In fact, having nothing to support but what belongs to him of undoubted right, he can be as simple and careless as any one else. Perhaps you were prepared to find in their ranks only some morose figure that could justify you for exclaiming on its appearance "Voici l'ennemi!" as when the great Condé roused up with those words the Duchesse de Longueville as soon as he saw mount the pulpit the Père preacher, who was noted for his austere views and fearful eloquence. Perhaps you were led to think, after reading a page of Sainte-Beuve, that only under such stately groves as those of Juilly which Malebranche haunted, in the silent cloisters of Rome, or in episcopal gardens like those of the Bishop of Amiens, such men should be found; but at all times, and every where, be assured, they are in general of a gentle mould. Who is that friend of his, for instance, that thrice in his life he happened to meet in those places, without his dreaming that they could not be found on the highway or on the river? Who is that who walks and converses, as he tells you, with that delicate and affectionate smile, that benign countenance? who, amidst such ingenious and elevated thoughts has such pleasant words for every one, such mirthful anecdotes such amenity in all he utters? "You need not ask," he adds "it is one of them; it is the Abbé Gerbet*." Or is it in the humble dwelling of a young couple just set up in life, who might be apt to accompany you some fine evening on a stroll that you suppose the feet of such men leave no traces? You may meet there an Abbé Haluin, who has devoted his life to succour and befriend the youthful wanderers, for whom he has founded an asylum. It is he who has followed them after they left it; who has enabled them to marry, and who comes now to see whether they have every thing requisite in their new condition. He is not content with hearing from their own lips that they have all they want; he must see it for himself. And lo

* Causeries, tom. vi.

he finds that they have no fireplace. He returns home, removes the stove from his own room, and sends it to them. And is this the man that you think will refuse their invitation to go out for the day along with them and you, to enjoy a serene hour in the fields? Why, it is a priest, the Abbé Ameilhon, who in the best treatise on the subject that exists has shown the excellence and advantages of the art of swimming, which he recommends all the world to cultivate*. An Abbate Meli, too, does not exist only at Palermo. Every where can be found some one or other of these men, who, if not a poet in regard to expression, seems to live only to do good and to give pleasure, as much beloved by the poor as his company is in request among the prosperous. To say that Meli, for instance, was to be of the party, was to give an evening assembly of friends its highest zest†. So it is with his genial representative among ourselves, who spontaneously observes the rule of St. Bernardine of Sienna, without having perhaps ever heard of it,—namely, "to teach humanely what he has received divinely‡." If you wish to make the boy and girl happy for the day, the good, cheerful priest must be of the party. That I can undertake to predicate. It were only indeed to be wished that the whole conduct of the cause here advocated had been committed from the beginning to such clear, cloudless heads as theirs, so pure, so noble, and so free, ever raised against what is unreasonable; and then there would be no reason to fear injuring what one wished to serve, or bringing into disrepute what one thought it a sort of good action to magnify. But since for this time others are engaged, it is as yielding occasional companions only that we are alone now concerned with them.

Who then does not meet upon his path, from time to time, with one of these hearty, simple, unostentatious men of peace, to whom, notwithstanding all one's own sprightly humours, not to say because of them, one feels prompted to say, at least inwardly, with the pagan king in our old play,—

* Hist. de l'Acad. des Inscr. tom. xviii.
† L. Hunt.
‡ S. Ber. Senens. tom. iii. s. 4.

> "There are some things of venerable mark
> Upon thy brow; thou art some holy man
> Design'd by providence to make us happy.
> Thy aspect doth promise goodness?"

Grave at times of course, but without being austere; learne without pedantry, polished without affectation, they have goo and pleasant words on their tongue and charity in their heart We see proof in the tales of Cervantes that such men were n regarded by the population of his time in the same light as th in which they are shown by later humourists who did not pe sonally know them. When the brothers, for instance, in h novel of the Two Young Girls, deliver the plundered travelle giving alms to the most necessitous, we read that they, acti the part merely of good impulsive fellows, were especial generous to the eight monks and priests who had been l robbed and bound with the others. English antiquarians, t sometimes light upon startling evidence to the same effe For instance, among Archbishop Warham's letters they find o addressed to a certain Whetnal and others, appointing a certa day for them to certify to him the feelings of the inhabitan of Tunbridge as to a proposal for suppressing the priory, an founding a grammar-school there for forty scholars of thos parts, with promotion to Oxford and exhibition for their sup port. "A good multitude of the said town," says the prelat "according to the said appointment, had been here with m this present day, shewing as well by mouth as by writing tha they think it more expedient to leave the continuation of th said monastery with the prior and his convent, as it hath bee used in tymes past, than to have a grammar-schole for xl c their children, to be sent thence free to Oxford; and they hav presented a book of diverse persons' names, their neighbours, i a great number, which be of like mind in that behalve." Th result of a renewed inquiry was still the same; for the letter i indorsed, "Thinhabytauntes of Tunbridge had rather theyr pryory stode still than to have a schole for xl children to l sent thence to Oxford*." Even at the present day a simila

* Archæologia Cantiana, vol. i. 31.

feeling of respect, at least, towards such persons is sometimes evinced, where circumstances might lead one least to expect it. 'Ah, you need not laugh at me," says the nephew of Rameau to Diderot, "I am a vagabond, but it is only through vanity that I have put myself in the train of your philosophy. At the bottom of my soul there is a Christian secreted. You hate priests, and I love them; you congratulate England for having got rid of monks and wolves. That is all very fine, but the monks are my benefactors. At six years of age going barefoot and bare-headed on the highway, it was a monk who saved me. I was as ignorant as any one could be, and it was a monk who taught me to read; and if I am to-day a musician and a critic in music, and if my violin responds with docility to all the lamentations of my soul, and to all the inspirations of my heart, it was a monk who was my master." But we have testimonies at least indirectly from graver men. "Meeting," says an aged member of this order, "one day a celebrated English judge,"—naming a well-known and eminent personage now dead,—"he fell into conversation with me as a stranger. He spoke to me about his fine house and grounds, and lamented that his failing health seemed to announce to him the speedy loss of all things. Ah! well, I replied, you know we did not come into the world to be here always, or to enjoy for ever the pleasures of an affluent fortune. We all have been sent here for a different purpose. The judge heard me, and in reply only said abruptly, and rather drily, with a snappish tone, 'Are you a minister, sir?' 'No,' said I, 'my lord, I am no minister, but a Catholic priest.' I wish you had seen his altered look, so sad and respectful! He took off his hat slowly, bowed himself half to the ground, and then walked on gravely in silence *." Notwithstanding momentary shadows caused thus, perhaps, by some internal struggle, it is obvious that the presence or even the memory of such a man as then spoke to the judge, holds out, as were, a beacon to guide towards serene hours those who are engaged amidst the tempests of the heart. Perhaps some don't much care to have in sight a beacon merely as such. Likely enough. "The Marechal de Villeroy," says Saint-Simon, "used

* It was the late Rev. Mr. Costigan, of Margate.

sometimes to call on a certain holy man, and he always return charmed with his visit, though he used to hear little short b well put in lessons, which perhaps at the time he was not e actly in search of*." But, my fine fellows, however hearty nc and gay, if you are never to meet one of such men, you w verify perhaps the truth of what some one says, that "the ri man hath seldom good counsel but if he have it of himself and heaven knows in that case how long you may have to wa for it, and consequently for a true serene hour. Moreover, t fact is, as an eloquent voice has lately proclaimed, "the whc human race, and therefore a party like ours, at one time other requires such a ministry. It has need in its darkness of light, in its passions of a rule, in its agitations of a rest wh it cannot find in undecided affirmations. Man has no need masters to teach him to doubt. He requires for his conduct a for his serenity the affirmative answers which are in the fai and the heart of the priest †."

However, not to cite such grave examples of the influen arising from this twofold culture raised to a degree still, wi all its condescension, so far above us,—without taking adva tage of the fact that it was these principles which formed t ancient heroes of Christian history; that what thought Alf and the Confessor, Charlemagne and Saint-Louis, those w adhere to them think now, thinking in fact, to use Saint-Simo words, "as all antiquity has thought in every country ‡," a co sideration by no means unapt, in the fields as well as in t cabinet, to promote interior serenity,—let us be content w observing what comes to us in the homely, familiar shape those common lads and lasses who are our ordinary associat who, if not such as these, resemble them, nevertheless "impe mentis et voluntate."

In some of our thoughtless moments it is just possible th Sir Priest, invested with a wisdom and greatness of mind whi are at such an elevation above us, may seem, one, certes, th promises no element in such a business as we are hoping

* Tom. xvii.

† Dupanloup, La Souveraineté Pontificale, p. 489.

‡ Tom. xvii. 322.

achieve,—in one sense, a man more admirable, as Cicero would say, to hear of, than agreeable to meet with, though, what the orator did not foresee, he can be as popular as the best of us, and easily induced to take part, as we have just noticed, even in our recreations. But as it must be acknowledged that this stretch of humanity is only seen used in a way secondary to higher things, we must admit, too, that a more suitable subject for our present discussion is the kind of character that belongs to those of common mortals who are formed by this discipline when it is cultivated in secular life in an ordinary way, though still without any view to personal benefit or even future recompense, that kind which is fruitful by agreeable consequences to others, while for those endowed with it, it is often laborious, sometimes dangerous, or certainly at all times gratuitous and disinterested.

Speaking of a company of young men, friends of the President de Brosses, visiting in a rollicksome way remarkable places together, the French writer of his life exclaims, with a confidence that is almost amusing, "Where could one find in our days six companions of equal worth and in a similar disposition of mind?" Perhaps nowhere; I hope his displeasure rests on facts, and assuredly if so we have no cause to regret the alteration. The eighteenth century, which they so well represented in all those qualities which are hostile to true serenity, belongs now to history; and our times are better. That generation of young men without youth, as an eloquent voice was heard to lament, stripped of all grace and virtue, and even of those traits of countenance which are natural to it, proclaiming by their ignoble looks the hardness and corruption of their hearts, their gait insolent, their language proud and disdainful,—such a generation presenting at the time so great a novelty, and a character so singular and distinct from all that the world had ever before seen, has passed away, and let us devoutly hope, with Guenean de Mussy, who described it in these words*, never to return. But where, I should like to know, can we not find companions who, as distinguished from such irreverent mockers, and as examples of the influence we are requiring, are eminently qualified to

* Vie de Rollin.

enjoy and dispense the happiness of serene hours? What different group, for instance, is that of the five young me described by Halévy, consisting of Paul Delaroche, Edouar Bertin, Odier, Henri Delaborde, and Ampère, the last accom plishing his voyage Dantesque, when all of them, voluntar exiles from the Parisian life, retired for a season to the he mitage of Camaldoli, living there like the anchorites who gav them hospitality, with the solitary exception of having reserve for themselves the right of unlimited conversation! But witl out journeying to the Apennines, just think, in consequenc not of the religious talk that you fancy it must put into the mouths, though they have never learned it, but of the secre restraints and self-control that it involves, what sort of boys, an youths, and girls, this moral culture of the old style can form any where; what young people, what kind of young fellow though, as a waterman said of a passing lad, "he were th 'cheekiest' boy in all the neighbourhood," and, for that matter what kind of old fellow too it can turn out on a summer's day The chat, the manner, the tone, the very looks, that bear th stamp of this secret discipline, can verify any day the remark of Don Francisco de Moraes, which strikes one at first as para doxical, when he says at the close of the seventy-fourth chapte of his Palmerin of England, "the conversation of the good hath this in it, that both the good and the bad equally desire i for its own sake." It should be repeated over and over again that unless we are never to realize our object, and even unless we are to perish, what is wanting in this world of ours is a counter-charm to keep us out of the circle of evil enchantment Well, in such company, male or female, we have what will some times prove a very effectual antidote. With respect to others if in every respect they do not realize the type, at least we see how many try, and apparently from their hearts, to copy it though there may be some only moved, as it would seem, by an archæological taste, of whom one might say with Cicero, it were to be wished that they would imitate "nec ossa solum, sed etiam sanguinem! Gratum est tamen, quod volunt." And indeed, as some one writing in a blank leaf of Dugdale's Monasticon demands, alluding to him who studied ancient historic, though merely material monuments,—

"Think'st thou the warbling Muses never smiled
On his lone hours? Ingenuous views engage
His thoughts on themes unclassic falsely styled.
Nor rough nor barren are the winding ways
Of hoar antiquity, but strewn with flowers."

Good blood, as the Spaniards would say, venerates and loves its mother. Let us proceed, then, to notice a psychological fact which may appear marvellous to some, namely, that respect and affection for religion organized, for religion in its external development as Christian antiquity understood it, and as still visible to the multitude in what is known all over the world as the Catholic Church, which would embrace the whole world, and every one of us in particular, with a tenderness not less judicious and profitable for being maternal, constitutes another element, delicate, no doubt, but very potent and essential to the general state of mind which has a capacity for the enjoyment of true and thoroughly serene hours. This is an observation of which some may not, at first, be able to discern the justice. As some one says in a play of Beaumont and Fletcher's,

"———— This is strange,
You may imagine; but this is true now, captain."

The Church may be said to describe herself when on Holy Saturday she reads the prophecy, "Super omnem gloriam protectio. Et tabernaculum erit in umbraculum diei ab æstu, et in securitatem et absconsionem a turbine et a pluvia." So she supplies us, you perceive, by these words, with the very things that are needed on such occasions as we are supposing—protection, refreshment, shade, privacy, and security from what would disturb our peace.

There are two ways, for common persons like ourselves, of looking at the Church,—from without and from within. The first, in one respect, requires some degree of historical knowledge, which, for a certain reason, happily we have hardly a right to expect from every one; though it would conduce, one might suppose, somewhat to the serenity of people gone out for the day, if, when visiting ruins or old edifices that want to tell their own story, they were prevented by means of possessing a

little knowledge of ancient things, from having only a burlesque parody of that story presented to them, seeing nothing but matter for either a censure or a jest—each part that is pointed out causing them either to shudder with indignation, or to burst into laughter through a sense of the absurd. Unless they are merely young men invited, and willing to talk, quite ready to be put to their "extemporal faculty of fooling and speaking loud to satisfy the company," it can hardly be pleasant for excursionists to find themselves in this dilemma, at least, if they are disposed to feel any interest in the old walls that they have come to admire. I remember, on a rowing party to Windsor, when shown round St. George's Chapel, our attention being called to a side enclosure as having belonged to some great family or other, of which the name I forget, and when told that it was for holy water, some one venturing to suggest that there must be a trifling mistake there, as that was always placed at the entrances of churches, and not where there was no door, when the very civil and well-meaning officer who conducted us replied, with an air of knowing gravity, "that however that might be true elsewhere, it was as he said here;" adding, with a very serious face, "you see the side chapel belonged to this high family, and so here they had their water quite comfortable all to themselves." To enjoy a joke inwardly is one thing which we thought on that ocasion quite compatible with serenity, but it would have been another thing to have gone away, as some persons would probably have departed, when some such gullery as this can be enforced upon them, with the impression that our forefathers who raised or used these magnificent structures were such silly people as that authoritative explanation would leave us to infer. It would have been as bad to have had no more previous provision for escaping from such impressions than is furnished by such historians as Gibbon speaks of, saying, in allusion to Voltaire, "when he treats of a distant period, he is not a man to turn over musty monkish writers to instruct himself. He follows some compilation, varnishes it over with the magic of his style, and produces a most agreeable, superficial, and inaccurate performance*."

* Miscell. IV. v. 248.

But this is rather a digression. We are not, then, as I said, to expect too much in the way of either archæological or historical knowledge from every one viewing the Church from without. Though, after all the disputes and protests to which she has given rise, unquestionably where logic is permitted to decide matters, there she stands still before every one of us, constituting the great wonder of the revelation of God. "It is she," observes Lacordaire, "who fills the scene of the world with a miracle that has now had eighteen centuries of duration. It is possible, of course, not to look at her, not to listen to her, not to comprehend her; but there she is. There she stands; and he who does not see her, or who takes her for something vulgar, will be still less capacitated for yielding to reason, or for receiving instruction from the past." However, as I said before, we do not wish to exact more from people than what can be demanded with perfect fairness in regard to this external view of the Catholic Church, seen from a distance by those who are not within her pale. Nevertheless, when the debt we owe to her is clearly pointed out and established, it does seem necessary for our object of being serene, that it be not insolently protested against, but gratefully acknowledged, — to pay it is another matter, in regard to which obligation we are all of us, of course, insolvents. We may observe any day, in common life, that whenever an association exists for a specific purpose, if it were only some club of good fellows, or some academy of art or science, especially if it be capable of involving an object more mental than material, there is a disposition on the part of its members collectively and individually to magnify those who, in former times, may be considered as having anticipated their wishes and adopted their peculiar tastes. They have portraits of them in their respective halls, or they even call their societies after them. If this rule be observed as it ought to be in our confraternity of serene hours, there will be a resolution passed at their first meeting to venerate and love the memory of that great institution which, in former times, during many ages expressly legislated and, if we may so speak, combated in order to enable men to reap this particular sort of enjoyment.

Of course, from the beginning, its mission, while devoted to the propagation of truth, was to promote all peace on earth that

could be compatible with that object; but, in order to concentrate our observations within the limits which our space and time require, let us only cast a retrospective glance at that mediæval expedient,—for even the Church condescends sometimes to use expedients,—of the truce of God, which alone would settle the question as to what power can justly claim the honour of having in very remote times pursued this pacific object with success, and for which achievement, considering the difficulties that were then presented to it, all who now love serenity should be profoundly grateful. It is a curious page of history which relates how the Church by degrees gained her point with a semi-barbarous population, of obtaining intervals of peace, or, as we might say, a few serene hours for men; first it was only for the Sunday, then from nones on Saturday to matins on Monday; then for Thursday, the ascension; for Friday, the passion; for Saturday, the burial; then for all Advent and Lent, for great festivals and their octaves. Then Lent was to begin from the Monday before Shrove Tuesday, and to last till the octave of Whitsuntide. So by an innocent artifice the Church obtained in portions what was refused in mass. The days of truce, in 1041, did not amount to fewer than 300 days in the year. Then, from the first, she obtained peace perpetual for clerks, monks, nuns, for the edifice of each church, and sixty paces round it, for the peasant and his house, for his clothes, his ox, his cow, his colts to the age of six months, for even the olive-trees; for the shepherd and his flocks, for the scholar and the merchant, for the traveller, for every man going to a church; for women, and, pray observe this truly generous clause, for the man who accompanied a woman. What grace can thus be learned from the canons while treading our way through the streets in this nineteenth century!

We know, indeed, that in subsequent times establishments founded in rivalry, as it were, of the ancient Church, were made in different parts of Europe. It was a policy as old as the times of the Roman empire, when it sought to borrow from Christianity the secret of its power in imitating its organization*. History records with what spirit they were instituted, and with

* De Broglie, l'Eglise et l'Empire, t. i. 182.

what means set up. I ask not here, whether these were, in regard to truth, more enlightened, or with reference to civilization in other respects, more instrumental to the happiness of mankind; one has not to answer such questions here; though when we can remember a gilt counterfeit, the matter which suggests them will hardly have slipped out of our contemplations; for indeed they have beguiled you with a counterfeit, resembling majesty, which being touched and tried proves valueless. But, comrade, speak in the ear of silent heaven. Supposing even that wars had now ceased, the noise and rumours of which are thundering in our ears, and as if nothing were important now but shapes and forms of slaughter, in a way too to confound the theories of some people, as America can bear witness,—have these new expedients, so simple, as we are told, and reformed, done as much for the interests of each man's serene hours, without the house and within it? consequently, have they done as much, whatever be the outward aspect of the world, even politically and socially, in the exterior domain of ordinary popular action, as in the secret sanctuary of each man and woman's breast, towards imparting the power to realize such enjoyment? That is the question to be asked in our private conferences, to answer which I conceive will involve, where there is fairness and a little correct information drawn from original sources, no very great difficulty.

But in general the Church, as far as she was able, protected all pacific interests. The poor, for instance, were objects of her constant solicitude, and persons like ourselves, exposed to dangers of different kind from the liability of being knocked about over the world, inspired her with a carefulness which looked sometimes even like childlike excess; for so late as in the fifteenth century the Pope interdicted navigation on the Tuscan sea, in the autumn and winter seasons, as being too dangerous; which fact, the mere mention of which, by the way, has caused a grave critic to accuse me of being a most extravagant ultramontane, which shows how profound are the views of some English writers at the present day, can be gathered from the voyage to Jerusalem by the Seigneur de Caumont, who on his return, in consequence of the prohibition, had to pass the winter in Sicily. Moreover, with any degree of historical information

such as even boys or working men possess, there is no such thing as having a right to point at any organization or external development of religion, unmixed with that of secular government, as being a monument of oppression or of social disturbance in any age. Men are men, and subject to the influence of the times they live in; but where evil followed, it did not arise out of the principles of the ecclesiastical polity unmixed. We may say in the words of the poet,

> "——— These walls of ours
> Were not erected by their hands from whom
> You have received your griefs; nor are they such
> That these great towers, trophies, and schools should fall
> For private faults in them."

But why deem such assertions and proofs necessary? The Prince of Peace, to whom Christians should all look up with loving reverence as their Founder and their Benefactor, has loved the Church and delivered himself for it; "how then," demands Lacordaire, "can we not love what He has loved, and for which He offered his life and death? He has purchased it with his blood."

But then people must mind not to fall into an error here; for it is not an archæological love for the church of any one period,—for the church of the primitive Christians, for the church of the Fathers, for the church of the middle ages, still less for the church of diplomatic prophets, such as they pretend it ought to be,—which is required as an element of serenity. Exclusive even of the last, such a love might be only an element of political troubles, of social confusion, of personal apostasy; or it might only indicate the presence of those whose reign having already wronged the time to come in the time o'erpast, the future misused ere used by times gone by, leaves them but ground to plead what they have been, not what will be, and to echo the strange language of those

> "Who in new-fangled terms old truths explaining,
> Teach honest Englishmen vile double meaning;"

opening, in point of fact, in each of these instances, a fresh source of idle and intemperate discussions, of absurd quarrel-

ling, and even perhaps of street disturbance; but that which is necessary is a respect and love for what alone confers importance on the past, since without it the past would be the worst of all human vanities, namely, for the Church of our own times, as it actually exists and is seen and administered around us, and which, however it may hereafter accommodate herself to what the future has in store, demands the unfeigned homage of all who are interested in their own private peace, to say nothing of that of the world. Observe how, in reference to this qualification, Balzac writes. "I wish," he says, "you may find, according to the custom of our times, Jesus, Maria, on all my papers. You see I do not approve of the two great personages lately who omitted naming the Virgin in their will, which was published with their works. In my opinion, in these things one ought to follow the custom of one's own epoch, and be counselled by the Père Simon rather than by Tertullian or Origen, aye, or even by Justin Martyr or Clement of Alexandria. We can be of the primitive Church by the imitation of ancient virtue; but we ought to be of the present Church by the practice of things which are observed in it; and those who know how to make books are no less obliged to observe them than those who can't read*."

We, rather insignificant, poor people, mere boys and madcap girls, gone out for the day, somewhat looked down upon in grave circles, or even suspected for our general inclination, though it is an honest object we have in view, have sought, without indeed any thanks being due to us, but instinctively with a view to our own composure,—and we believe that every one who desires the calm delights of a serene hour should seek,—to associate in the minds of our contemporaries, as well as in our own thoughts, the idea of this Church, of its wisdom, and of the obligations resulting from it,—not with things that change from age to age, and almost from year to year,—with schools of philosophy, with primitive antiquities, with mediæval curiosities, with political sagacities, with what belongs to the halting-places, or stages, or onward flights, or retrograde movements of the

* Lettres.

human race, with artificial and conventional tastes, fashions, styles, and theories, but with what is absolute and eternal in the thoughts of God, with beauty, youth, naturalness of character, love, charity, the common things of life, justice, mind, humility, gracefulness, and moderation; and we believe that by such a mode of representing it and looking on it, we contribute so far to the great end of rendering those who accept this view of what has been willed in mercy for the world, immoveable, secure, and, in a word, serene for ever. And if it were allowable to allude to other literary doings by some of the present hands now on board with us, one might perhaps venture to suggest, that it was also a natural and an inoffensive project to complete that series by carrying it down to what, in one respect, more immediately and practically concerns our own times and the generality of our countrymen who occupy the lower or middle steps of the social ladder; showing, for example, that what was most noble and heroic when read of in castles as associated with the loftiest ideal of chivalrous life—that what was most venerable when found in libraries on the early and mediæval monuments of Christian history, and that what was most true when found, on all the highways and paths of life, as the result of experience, confirming what is taught in the schools of philosophy and religion, is also the most favourable to the development of the common affections, the most wild-flower like, the most capable of an affinity with what is real, and positive, and popular, and sweet, and naturally relished, and loved by the human heart, when seen existing in cottages or garrets within the common homes of the age we live in, conjoined with the ordinary habits and manners of the vast majority of our fellow-creatures.

So much then for the disposition required for the purpose of realizing serene hours as far as respects the Church, viewed as it were from without. We have not exceeded moderation in our demands; we have asked, in fact, for nothing but what cannot be denied with good sense and common fairness. It remains to notice, with a view to the same object, the requisite qualifications in its regard as viewed from within; for the attainment of which we need no aid from history, but only the power of

seeing, and hearing, and feeling too, like other people, a little for ourselves, since, as a great author tells us, "the Church is open to all favourable winds, and to all gentle murmurs."

Here the interests of serene hours, identical with those of truth, require that we should begin by taking enlarged and generous views of all things. For it will be a mixed scene that will be presented. There will be observed what seems waste, imperfection, nullity, useless deposits caused by time—encrustations that have a deleterious quality, strange unaccountable things growing up that we can neither believe nor disprove—and moreover, nothing finished, nothing perhaps as we would have it, just as in all God's works; there will be apparently strangers in the crowd as well as those of the household. But we must let Lacordaire speak for us; on such a theme, we dare not trust our own lips.

What then is this association viewed from within which all the world, that would have only a few hours of thoroughly serene enjoyment, is invited to join? "Christ," he replies, "has created the society of souls founded on Him in love. All persons, it is true, do not know the source of the fire that consumes them. Some cannot name Jesus Christ, because He has never been named to them. Obscure victims of the cross which saves them, they have not been led from their birth to the feet of Calvary. But a drop of this blood has searched for them across invisible furrows, and mixed with theirs as an aroma of eternal life; they have responded by a silent groaning to the appeal of charity. The Church, therefore, is not alone what it appears to us. It is not only in this visible construction, where all is history, authenticity, hierarchy, virtues, and external miracles; it is also in the twilight, in the evanescent shades, in that which has neither form nor memory, sanctities lost to the vision of men, but not lost to that of angels. There is not a single soul besides, however well known, which has not an impenetrable sanctuary, and which does not offer to God, in this holy of holies, a mysterious incense, that does not reckon on the manifestation of this world, but which weighs in the glory of the other. Thus is the Church partly invisible; and, remark here, neither is the creation confined wholly to the luminous globes of the firmament. It is not alone in the cedars of Solomon, in

the waves of the ocean, in the wings of the eagle, in the cou
tenance of the lion; it is also in the sand of the desert, in th
herb that stoops under a drop of water, in the insect which t
sun warms, and which it does not see. Love, which is t
foundation of the Church, is the most impalpable of living fluid
and if the eye of man has never been able to detect, in the lig
tissue of his nerves, the ambrosia which animates them, ho
much more ignorant is he of the ways of divine love? You
as you are, then, you know enough not to limit the Church
the visible walls of Jerusalem and to the exterior towers
Sion. Wherever the love of God is, there is Jesus Chri
Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Church with Him. A
if it is true that every Christian ought to unite himself to t
body of the Church as soon as he knows of its existence, so is
also certain that invincible ignorance dispenses with this la
to leave its victim under the immediate government of Je
Christ. The Church, then, has an extension which no hum
eye can embrace; and those who oppose to us the limits wh
it seems to their eyes to have, are persons who have no idea
the twofold radiance which is in its nature, raising up for
souls from the east and from the west, under the sun that h
gone down as well as under the sun that is above the horiz
But," he continues, "it is not alone the souls inspired by t
love of God which belong to the Church. However admira
might be a society composed exclusively of the just, there wo
be wanting to it a thing which the divine goodness has at hea
namely, sinners. Now, Jesus Christ has loved them too well
have them excluded from his work. He has come expressly
call them. The just are those who love, sinners are those w
love not. Turned aside from God by a weakness imputable
their faults, but imputable also to the faults of their fathe
they retain in their far-off position the power to return. Th
heart is alienated; it is not extinguished. God discerns in
windings where some fire still survives; secret passages d
tined for repentance; doors badly shut against the light;
membrances which nourish hopes; sometimes a single point
unwounded through which life can enter suddenly, as a gu
gone asleep on the threshold. Still it was impossible tha
sinner who loves not could be a real member of a soci

founded on love. It pleased, then, Christ to bind him to it firmly by an artifice worthy of the blood that had saved the world. A sacrament was instituted, to be administered to all nations, a symbol, a remedy, and an initiation. So when grace is outraged by a voluntary servitude, the soul still is in the Church as a root is in the earth, which may bud forth later. In vain does the erring one sadden love by his indifference. Hope and faith remain to him to keep him standing before God. In vain does he even abandon hope and faith. Both of them, and love with them, subsist in germ in the sacred character of his baptism, as the flower withered by the heat subsists in the source which can still yield it water, and in the scorched banks which wait for its return. In spite of ourselves baptism holds us to the anchor of faith, hope, and charity. Only a formal apostasy, or a personal excommunication, can detach us from it. With this exception all belong to the Church, which has been so dyed with the blood of Jesus Christ that there remains on its interior vestment the indestructible spot, which nothing else can wash out. How I have always loved," concludes the eloquent theologian, "this admirable economy, which has made so high and wide the gate through which one enters into the city of God, and so low and narrow the door through which one leaves it*!" Such is the passage that seems to express the aspirations as well as the instinctive convictions of men and women respecting the width, and breadth, and height, and depth of the doctrine of charity in application to our conception of the Church, which, whether we view it from without or from within, is built, as Lacordaire says, a standing and visible miracle at the present day. Yes, the fabric of God is before our eyes; all strength has touched it; all science has scrutinized it; all blasphemy has cursed it. See, there it stands. "Factum est." There exists thus on earth, on this earth of dust and passage, a kingdom of souls where God is served in spirit and in truth; where nothing resembles what is seen elsewhere; where man abdicates his private spirit, and accepts instead of it that of his spiritual King,—the sovereign reason,—in consequence of which act it is no longer himself, but Christ, who lives and

* Lacordaire, Lettres à un jeune Homme sur la Vie Chrétienne.

speaks in him,—constituting, by the way, the real secret of that aversion for the Church which is felt by so many philosophers who would each occupy a spiritual throne, and rule intellectually over their fellow-creatures. Such is the great society spread over the entire world every day and hour, dispensing peace to men of good will, entering into all history, constant in accordance with all primeval traditions, fulfilling all prophecy, in affinity with all knowledge, and harmonizing with all truth. The serene influence of such profound and yet simple views, will indeed follow people every where and at all times; but here we should observe their effect in regard to the feelings with which we enter actually the walls of churches, and mark what passes within them; for our river excursions, as at Weybridge, Kingston, Richmond, Brentford, Mortlake, Fulham, and Chelsea, lead us, we might say, within sight of their very towers, and even curiosity alone may induce some to enter them.

Where cannot people of good will enjoy serene hours? A student of the "Imitation" knows that these can be at their full where every thing seems opposed to them; that in all ages, as at the present day, these hours can be enjoyed even where, as a necessary condition, miracles are witnessed, that is, amidst outward horrors, when all is within the heart serene,

"And Eden raised in the waste wilderness."

We have not surveyed life from such elevated and mystic ground; we have generally imagined them associated with aid from what is positive and external, as having been passed in a garden, on a sunny bank, or on the tranquil river, as our title indicates. But there is another place not as yet noticed, no less, I admit, borrowing an influence from what externally, and visibly, and audibly favours them, a place—which it was not my intention directly to notice in these rambles, farther than by casting a passing look, as it were, backwards on the moments when it was discerned, or listening, as it were, to the organ from without, while beholding the external accompaniment of the file, to use the expression of a great writer; where this enjoyment, though in a different form, is the culmination,

the summit of serenity attainable by mortals, something far beyond what can even be conceived elsewhere, excepting as a recollection or a prolongation of experience by means of it. What place is that? It is one so old that you can trace its existence from the days of Abel,—so needful for man that it is said to correspond in his regard with the house for the sparrow and the nest for the turtle-dove; so appropriate to our particular purpose, that the last words of the prophet, five hundred years before its outward erection, in allusion to it were these: "And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts*"—so redolent of the joy of heaven, that the Psalmist, after pronouncing blessed all who dwell in it, appears only able to qualify it by notes of admiration, exclaiming, "Altaria tua, Domine virtutum! Rex meus et Deus meus!" This is enough to indicate the answer. We have not, therefore, to go far to find this place, since it is neither more nor less than within those four walls where are celebrated what the first Christians called Σωτηρίου πάθους ἀπόῤῥητα σύμβολα, where the antique and well-noted face of a plain old form has not been disfigured and, like a shifted wind unto a sail, made the course of thoughts to fetch about, making truth itself suspected for putting on a newly fashioned robe,—place august and venerable, to which the people every where still resort in such crowds that the neighbourhood is rather disliked by those who try to avoid the poor,—it is, in fine, with the multitude, with persons of whom some, perhaps, have no external peace, but who in most distressful moments know where to come to look for what far exceeds it, as it passeth all understanding,—namely, "His grace," without a sound, without a word, uttering in silence the language of reverential thought,—it is within the gates of the material church or chapel, let enemies call it what they please, yes, even so, just there by the door, unknown, unobserved, for one of the million, jostled and pressed together along with these poor young fellows who have no rents to expect but what they carry about with them, and, as poets say, each one, the young and the aged, the grave and the gay, "less by the knees," "genibus minor." "Eamus in ecclesiam," as Victorinus said to Simplician, "Chris-

* Haggai, c. 2.

tianus volo fieri." Homer, probably not being acquainted, after his long and multifarious experience, with any minute philosopher, says that all men pray to heaven, which, by the way, is itself a fact worth noticing, whatever such a well-informed man as the latter in modern times may say to us. Here, at all events, you see man such as Homer contemplated, man thinking of heaven, praying to heaven; man, as your own Butler wished to behold him, "instructed in the importance of external religion,"—having "religion recalled to his thoughts by public offices*."

> "So it falls out on a highe holye daye,
> As many bee in the yeare,
> When yong men and maides together do goe
> Their masses and mattins to heare."

What is very remarkable, too, for we must never disdain to notice little things, you witness here in young men reverence and merriment combined, or ready to act in concert,—you see them reverent and devout while on their knees, with all the expression of unfeigned and profound devotion, merry the moment the office is over and they have passed the threshold, throwing their arms, perhaps, round each other's necks with laughter and frolic, as one may have seen Spanish sailors, whose looks proclaimed them as having a good will to all the world. Certainly a discipline, a system of belief, that makes youth thus religious, thoughtful, and mirthful almost at one and the same time, must be a potent element of serenity for the human heart. We might add, too, that its tendency in this direction, arising from the very spectacle that you are witnessing, is indicated plainly enough also elsewhere in the bonds of companionship, as it were, with which it supplies those who without it would be living isolated, unknown, and perhaps even, as some in London, starving in solitude in the midst of the rich. "Many of the poor," says the same Butler just noticed, "many who are settled in London, and who are in a manner strangers to the people amongst whom they live, must unavoidably be neglected in the hurry and concourse around them, and be left unobserved

* Serm. to the Clergy of Durham.

to languish in sickness and suffer extremely, much more than they could in less populous places;" but where the Catholic religion exists, where all these poor people have met together in the churches, every one, even in a great city, is known to every one; and any great distress presently becomes the common talk, and poor families have neighbours not alone sympathizing, but either themselves aiding or procuring others to aid them. To repeat the remark of a French writer, "even if there were no other good result, the great and immense advantage of having, in common life and in poverty, those religious habits which in their form exclusively belong to the communion of faith, is that they enable people to vindicate themselves from solitude every where, and to create relationships around them, which would not otherwise have been formed or dreamt of. From this point of view," he adds, "the pious practices of people belonging to the old faith merit more attention than they have hitherto obtained from writers on political economy*."

With respect to a view of the Church from within, the topic becomes of course more delicate for us to handle. We are not, as I said, going to dwell on this part of our subject as if thinking ourselves competent to treat it in a manner worthy of its solemnity,—how could men with oars in or just out of their hands? how could any one, though in a cloister rapt in mystic vision?—but let us be pardoned for remarking a few things, obvious to the commonest of mortals, that will show how, if any where on earth, pure serenity is here.

The sort of companions that our friends have been all along choosing for their excursions, so homely in the boat, so free and popular in the fields or garden, will not desire to seem select, and stately, and distinguished in the church. They will soon find it comfortable to be left unnoticed amidst fustian jackets and spotted cotton gowns, or the smartness and appearances that are put on for a day,—amidst persons who are all either waiting round the tribunals which seem to proclaim that we are every one of us women's sons and daughters, of one and the same nature, exposed to the same troubles, and proposing

* Le Correspondent, tom. xix. p. 785.

in the best way we can the same goal,—or else in the act of joining in a common act of adoration. The comrades of their choice and predilection, with an eye to little and subtle things, as is the way with them, especially when it is a question of detecting good in others, as was long since suggested, will not be slow to read, with a pleasure that partakes largely of serenity, all the indications of right feeling, ever alive and watchful, which, under all circumstances, are given here by the crowd around them. You may be benighted enough, as our liberals would say, to have felt the sort of impression producing an ideal of grandeur and solemnity caused by the presence near you of kneeling kings and queens assisting at rites that seemed made peculiarly for them, while these exalted personages were giving an example of devotion to the persons who were close at their side; but the next Sunday I will not suppose you to have been, through aversion to what is popular and truly liberal, vulgar enough to be insensible to the interest caused in finding yourself thrown amongst the motley plebeian crowd as one of the many for whom the same rites will then seem to be as exclusively intended. Here, too, is one of the varieties of English life, though not noticed by the great master who in his tales portrays so many of them. Does it not produce a certain serene pleasure to mark among the little childlike things that you are so fond of noticing wherever found, those next you, for instance, dressed so like young lordlings for the Sunday, who assist, unobserved near the door, with such fresh genuine impressions, such an unaffected manner, and even, one might add on the whole, propriety,—all shop-lads, perhaps, if the truth were known, or having to earn their bread laboriously in some way or other, all particular friends of each other, as is indicated by their sly winks and smiles, and, since youth cannot stand two consecutive hours without a little fun, occasional arch tricks, tickling each other's ears, perhaps, with palm-branches, if it be the day for holding them, or even dabbling a little furtively in the way of an unexpected sprinkling of some one with the symbolic font, which last device, however, is only noticed as a rare instance of being somewhat too thoughtless and over bold, though they manage to combine it with what is very respectable? To each of these young heirs-apparent, who you might

have thought had sat to Goldsmith for his portrait, when showing, if the occasion justified it, "defiance in his eye," though now it is only friendliness and the wish to be proper, no doubt the smallest item of brown money, if the truth were again let out, is very important for the purchase in later hours of the same day of nuts or oranges; and does it not cause an inward smile of approval when you see them for all that giving their pence with such earnestness and half-bashfulness, as if it were a bad action, at the offertory, thus making a sacrifice to their sense of right which is not to be estimated by its marketable value? And then those maidens

> "——— that have no other care than with
> What flowers, sweet as their own names,
> To adorn the smiling altars!"

do they not impress you with a deep sense of the charm of this serene hour? Many things, indeed, here seem the result of a mind more bent, as their enemies love to insinuate, on shows than blows, on sights than fights, on serenity than on controversy. But are they not suited to the purpose of those who love peace and pursue it? Consistent, at all events, they are in a high sense with the general voice that sounds within these walls; for what we hear continually in this place is "audiant mansueti et lætentur,"—it is not "audiant impii, audiant sævi, audiant barbari et violenti, audiant sanguinarii." Such spirits must go elsewhere to feel satisfied and verify the final words "et lætentur," which, in these later ages of the world, are then likely enough to be fulfilled.

What a thing for calming the mind is it to hear women sing the litany!—"toto corde ac mentis affectu, et vocis ministerio," as the Church says on Holy Saturday; to witness them praying the Mother of Christ to intercede with her divine Son to have pity on the human race, on husbands, sons, aye, and on innocent lovers too, for why exclude them? to hear, I say, women praying,—women who know so well of what poor marl these known and unknown ones are all made, yet whose sins are never remembered by them excepting in their orisons! No doubt, let me say parenthetically, there is great musical excellence in more skilled voices, and more solemn grandeur in

those of a choir canonically composed; though all the while some grave men would do well to remember, that it is to women they owe the very Latin words which they sing on such occasions,—since, had it not been for the ardent entreaties of Paula and Eustochia, St. Jerome would not have undertaken the translation of the Vulgate; but, be that fact remembered or forgotten,—for a litany in the church, or for a hymn, ah me! there is something better than scientific excellence or even ecclesiastic dignity; and therefore, I would say, let us have also at times, by all means, as of old, the women's voices. For, with very different views from those of Lucifer visiting a church and hearing them, one might say, that

> "They make a peculiar atmosphere,
> Such as we like to breathe at times."

And though, perhaps, you can fancy that some of them in the crowd may have been known once on a time before now to have sung, like poor Ophelia,

> "Good morrow, 'tis St. Valentine's day,
> All in the morning betime,
> And I a maid at your window
> To be your Valentine;"

though you can imagine that at times their old mortality may have had its way, and the woman have peeped out a little, as no doubt she was intended to do, still

> "We who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,
> We who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,
> We who know how much she weeps to hear that another
> Hapless heart like her own has loved and has been disappointed,
> Moved to the depths of her soul by pity and woman's compassion,
> Yet in her sorrow pleased that one who has suffered is near her;"

we, I say, who know or conceive all this, feel instinctively that it is only by their tears witnessing a love strong as death that our engulphed and shattered selves can find waftage to the peace we long for.

Then, again, those poetic, picturesque, and solemn ceremonies, fraught with such magnificence, and disliked so by the

"epulons" of immense fortunes, whose sideboards and banqueting-tables groan with costly plate artistically wrought in every design that fancy can conceive by help of the creation, as if they deemed it the right thing "to serve heaven with less respect than we do minister to our gross selves,"—how will not all hearts disposed as serenity at least would have them find rest under such shadows! They will feel instinctively with Balzac that "the least ceremonies which have relation to the divine worship should be held in the greatest reverence." Then, think of hearing Haydn's "Et vitam venturi sæculi," or Weber's "Agnus Dei," or the "In gloriam Dei Patris" of Mozart's twelfth mass, which has a solemn majesty, a breadth of mighty sound that should make the stickler for simplicity stand aghast!

Just think what must be the serenity of a great heart and a vast intelligence, while any one may partake of it, in that moment when one sees and hears every thing noble, by its representative, at least, employed in the worship of the Creator, and Redeemer, and Sanctifier of men,—when one observes, for instance, called into service thus reason, of which the prayers of the Missal are so perfect an exponent,—when one sees fervour in alliance with it, as manifested, even in the countenances and attitudes of the people,—when one observes history similarly applied, as in the lessons read, genius, as in the music performed and sung, art, as in the paintings that cover the walls, the charm of holy poverty, as in many present, and possibly the influence of rank, too, as in the royal personages, arriving perhaps in the capital like the Queen Marie Amelie and her illustrious relatives, only to assist at the church offices, and leaving it for the country after the last vespers of the fête, the annual custom of their court being thus regulated by the ritual. Think what must be the contentment when one witnesses such a combination — nothing good and great through narrow jealousy excluded—nothing true and beautiful stupidly or perversely protested against, but a genial, natural, universal fusion of every noble faculty that God has given to the human race, in blended simultaneous action, constituting a light of intelligence and a form of beauty and warmth of divine and human love! These are, indeed, serene intervals: who can place limits to the influ-

ence which they can exercise at the moment, and also on later hours, let people be where they may, causing each of them, perhaps, for the rest of their lives, with all their follies and sins, to be ever thinking twenty times to another man's once? Rather, who knows not that it is to these impressions many may owe all subsequent enjoyment of that profound calm which induces one when provoked to reply in these beautiful words, "You contend with a man whose soul's a great way off?" At least, it may be said without exaggeration, that often it is from these moments can be traced that practical humility in the highest, and what, perhaps, is as difficult, in the lower states of life, which emancipates and sweetens all social enjoyment, and sanctifies loyalty and royalty themselves, as when among the charters of Fontevraud, we find one beginning with "Alienora, Dei gratia humilis regina Angliæ*." It is highly probable that it is to these impressions some may owe that feeling for the poor which dictates such expressions for them as the 'Poveretto' and other fondling diminutives not unknown to our old English language, or even yet wholly obsolete among many of our lower orders when untaught by modern schools, and speaking of each other from their hearts. It is certain that reciprocally these impressions bind men to the religious unity, as if, to use the words of a great humanist but lately passed from amongst us, "it is only from the heights of sympathy that we can perceive the universal and the just†." One may beg permission to suggest, that it is to these impressions men may owe what is so often vainly talked of—the desire of an eternal friendship amidst changeless serenity, as when Rollin, writing to King Frederick, said, "It is too little for me to be your friend in this life—this life of which so little remains to me—I want to be your friend during eternity,—'cet unique vœu dit beaucoup de choses.'" He must have little acquaintance with such moments, in fine, who knows not that it is in such times and places many men contract that love of Christian fraternity which makes them ever afterwards slow to approve of wars among Christians, as when Cervantes represents Richard, the English Catholic captain, in the reign of

* Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes, tom. iv. 134.
† Leigh Hunt.

Elizabeth, as resolved never to draw his sword against Christians, even though he were to lose the hand of his Isabella by such a determination, in the event of his being unable otherwise to show his courage and serve the queen *. All these effects are intimately and immediately productive of a peace which it would be idle to think of describing, though it may enter as a copious ingredient into the little modest cup of joy which we taste and pass round to each other when we only go out for a day to partake of a serene hour. Therefore, if it were only with a view to our immediate object, low as you may think it, and in the interest of these poor short intervals intended for recreation, well might Richard of St. Victor invite men to frequent these sacred assemblies, saying, "Return to yourself and keep your heart; but woe to you if you remain there. Pass on to the admirable tabernacle, and to the house of God, and lay hold of the 'summum bonum,' hearing and obeying the voice that saith, 'Transite ad me †.'"

Observe, again, that those who would dissuade you from compliance with this invitation are generally, as we before suggested on a former occasion, persons by disposition even otherwise hostile to the purpose we have in view through all these excursions; they are sometimes, to speak the plain truth, discarding what conceals it, I will not say with the poet in his fable of the cat and the rat, the owl and the weasel,

"Toutes gens d'esprit scélérat,"—

but, at the best, men in whom is such apparent perversity that being in a position to find fruits they would feed on acorns; men, too, in whom you can see verified oftener than you might wish, the remark of Gracchus, "Abesse non potest quin ejusdem hominis sit probos improbare, qui improbos probet ‡." As a distinct and pronounced category, for many hold their tongues and so avoid being included in it, they are, in fact, on general grounds, persons whose thoughts and manners, true exponents of those thoughts, would render difficult, if not utterly impossible, at any time or in any place, though it were the sweetest

* The Spanish Englishwoman.

† De Extermin. Mali, 6.

‡ Orator.

honeysuckle bower in Christendom, the enjoyment of a serene hour.

Let us consider this latter point a little, and not mind being led backward a few steps, and those unpleasant ones.

I think it will be granted, in the first place, that a general and universal satirist, however clever or even amiable in other respects, who goes into a church perhaps like a certain foreign philosophic lady, in order to laugh and expose the vulgar grossness of those whom she calls "Chrétiens pour rire," who, in his graver hours, a good tough gentleman, is a systematic disparager of things held in religious reverence by a hundred and fifty millions of Christians, and ten millions of English subjects, ought not to be heeded much by persons in quest of serenity, and that the disposition itself, however combined with talent, when aggressively obtruded on others, must constitute decided ineligibility. A pestilent knave; to have his gibes and his mockeries! No doubt his wit ambles well; it goes easily, but we might credit Dogberry if he were to say of him, "Marry, he has committed false report; moreover, he has spoken untruths, slanders, and unjust things." And besides, in general, as Rosalind says, those who carry laughing to extremes, are abominable fellows. It is Swift who says somewhere that "it is in any man's power to suppose what he likes, and then laugh at his own supposition; that there are not many things cheaper than supposing and laughing; and that if the uniting these two talents can bring a thing into contempt, it is hard to know where it may end." As Pope says somewhere,

> "All fools have still an itching to deride,
> And fain would be upon the laughing side."

It is not difficult, however, to feel assured on such occasions that after they have done laughing, after they have ridiculed that which forms no essential part of what they attack—supposing that they have laughed away all belief in the legend, supposing, too, that the legend was a useless excrescence, a mere deposit from antiquity, as every thing old must have its deposits—it is not difficult, I say, to believe that after all the laughing and all the facetious commentary, the great main truths of this order, exponents and sources of serenity, will keep their places

in the opinions and estimation of mankind, just as before; and then surely must come, at least intellectually, the woe that Tacitus speaks of, and not peace to the conquered.

Then, again, with regard to formal accusations, it often happens that those persons who advance them with so prodigal a tongue, are the last who should charge others with the kind of thing that they say offends them. Under a different form possibly the precise fault condemned or ridiculed may exist in them. It may not wear the same dress, but there it is for all that. One is often tempted to say to such persons, O that you could turn your eyes towards the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves! O that you could! Still oftener perhaps do they need the injunction of the philosopher, "Si potestis, bonos laudate: si minus, transite." They are not much inclined to move on in this way. Truth is truth; but as Montalto says,

> "———— All truths meet not
> With charitable ears; there is a descant
> That pleases not sometimes, though the best art
> Present it, if our sense be indisposed
> To patience and calm hearing."

But peace of mind can hardly exist when imposture and unfairness are exposed or felt to exist within oneself. Some affect patriotism in their attacks upon the centre of unity for Christendom. In this respect the result somewhat resembles what was witnessed in France in the time of the Fronde, when those great patriots who constantly reproached Mazarin for being a foreigner, addressed themselves to Spain, to the foreigner, and moreover, at that time, to the sole enemy of their country *. Others, after laying hands on the thurifer, militate with the same object under pretence of putting men and nations on their guard against what they call usurped rights, involving a disposition to invade those of others—whereas the whole time they are only making war against the interests of all serenity, and trying to disparage a power which seeks the good order, and

* Cousin, Mde. de Longueville.

happiness, and peace of the world, by making them reign within each breast, as if prompting the words used at Christmas,—"regnabit super nos salvator mundi." With what justice does M. de Sacy compare in this respect the spirit of that much misrepresented, and consequently dreaded power, with the habitual disposition of those who cry out the loudest against it. "Though it is common," says this author, whom no one, I suppose, can suspect of what is termed ultramontanism, "to complain of the pretensions of the court of Rome and pretend that it wishes to meddle with every thing, the truth is, that it is we rather who go to it to constrain it if possible to meddle on a thousand occasions with our passions, our quarrels, and our troubles." "We do not," he continues, "understand, like Rome, the way of letting questions drop and fade away of themselves. We must have a decision, a formal judgment, an event. See the example of M. de la Mennais. It only depended on himself to pass the rest of his life happy at Frascati, in that retreat of which he describes so well the delightful situation. For the Pope's answer he would have had to wait thirty years, and the affair would have been forgotten. But this would not have answered his purpose. He was not come to Rome to seek there the religious peace of the soul, the freshness of leafy shades, the calm of serene hours. What he wanted from the holy see was arms wherewith to trouble the world." Accordingly, it is highly curious to hear his complaints. "How long," he exclaims, "will God permit this silence to continue! I do not believe that, since the world was a world, there has ever been such a prodigious movement of ideas amidst the silence of all that is entitled to speak. Every wave in this vast sea has its voice, while the sovereign of the ocean keeps still in his grotto." The fact was, as M. de Sacy continues, "that the court of Rome, easy and accommodating, seeking only peace, would have been willingly contented with the external submission of M. de la Mennais; perhaps even it would have thought the result as much as could be expected from such an arrogant and lofty mind. In France people were more difficult. They required from him an obedience of the heart, a dogmatic submission. I do not ask if a little passion did not mingle with this zeal, and if there could

not have been discovered a pleasure too human in treading on the pride of the man who had so long tyrannized over others*."

Then, again, would it prove, think you, conducive to enjoyment in serene hours to have at your elbow an ill-mannered literary caterer for "the public," who, appearing in his own character, might quite possibly be found with a mind and a style of utterance as unlike a Christian's as if he were a tattooed savage? whom "bell, book, and candle never could drive back when gold and silver becks them to come on?" Would you, a man who, perhaps, without being even a Christian, dislikes America, because he cannot find in it a village church seven hundred years old, desire to be actually in Charles Cotton's position, when he saw and heard things that made him think himself a stage or two beyond Christendom? I believe that the lightest youth among us would be tempted to repel such company, somewhat after the manner which Lacordaire ascribes to Mirabeau on one remarkable occasion. There was to be a contest of eloquence between him and a younger rival, whom the audience, through sympathy with his violent and extreme opinions, were predetermined to favour. After he had spoken amidst thunder of applause, Mirabeau ascended the rostrum calm and self-possessed. Received with unaccustomed silence, he measured in his mind all the popularity which he had lost, and drawing from this obstacle so new for him a force of despair, he returned like a lion in his wrath. At the first words, involuntary and passionate applause soon taught him what he already knew, his own triumph; and then, all of a sudden, looking at his opponent, no longer orator against orator, but an eagle soaring over his prey, he threw at him from afar that sublime and mortal apostrophe—"Barnave, il n'y a pas de divinité en toi!" But it is not alone the rationalistic element which would be fatal to our purpose on all occasions of the kind we are concerned with. There is danger from another and the opposite side. Therefore, I would ask would it serve our purpose to be confronted with a proud fanatic who comes like a prophet suddenly enrapt to tell thee that thy religion is thy greatest sin,—a

* Variétés littéraires.

sort of self-commissioned messenger, bidding you to view "thi ten-horn'd monster in the harmless hind," determining, with ludicrous minutia, what is not likely to happen, till the "paul post futurum,"—in commonest matters, one too shallow, muc too shallow, to sound the bottom of the aftertimes, and yc circumstantially announcing the fall of the ancient Church from which he is obliged to draw whatever constitutes a religiou element in his own system, and without which there could nc even be protestation or seers like himself, or a philosopher, witl out any religious denomination, assuring you, in defiance your senses, and the testimony of mankind, proclaiming it tc with every tone, with the denunciations of a prophet, with tl cries of a vulture, that the religion of millions of Christian which gave you the Bible and the Credo, and a thousand thin of a temporal order which you deem invaluable as life, is alrea overthrown? Little knows he of that vital body, enshrinin the immortal, that in every conflict forgets aged contusions ar all brush of time; and like a gallant in the brow of you repairs him with occasion. He thinks it not, being the oppos of such repairing nature; though needs must he behold how the moment it wears aloft its bargonet, as on a mountain tc the cedar shows, that keeps his leaves in spite of any stor even to affright him with the view thereof. However, it skil not urging this. The best reply, perhaps, would be to sh him simply the inscription preserved in a city of Spain, ar graven in great letters on a magnificent column. These are t words:—"Diocletianus Jovius, et Maximianus Herculeus, C sares, Augusti,—nomine Christianorum deleto qui rempublica evertebant," &c. "Diocletianus, Cæsar—superstitione Chr tianorum ubique deleta et cultu deorum propagato." &c. Af crying out so often upon no trail, they should never be trust when they open again.

Nor, again, would it be easy to reconcile with the calm pl sure you are proposing for yourself and your party the cho of a boisterous inveigher for companion, who in the pride of heart would be at every turn, to use his rough language, praying that the sea might swallow up one of the sister islan as no more meriting the tread of an Englishman's foot, thou while both sisters are charming, it is difficult not to feel t

the little one which he selects for destruction, has sometimes, of the two, the most affectionate and engaging manners. All the same. He would drown her without remorse, and counteracting all that her holy Patron once achieved, make her, submerged, a cistern for scaled snakes; that is to say, he would gladly see perish some millions of your fellow-subjects, in order that the very idea of their pacific banner might be blotted out from the mind of those who hated it. What a pestilent knave is this same! Exist in that romantic country and not fall in love with its population, but wish on the contrary to drown them all like young puppy dogs! Tacitus, indeed, said that if Ireland were subdued it would greatly profit Britain, for the reason that in that event a land of freedom could no longer be seen from its shores. But in the sense we are contemplating, our excited one, who to me appears most ugly, would still be at a loss for contentment even after the sinking of all Hibernia, unless he could convert to his opinions, or sink with it, the coast of Calais and Boulogne. However, as happily his rash petitions are not attended to, in such violent and distorted aspirations it would be hard to find aught but an element of impotent hatred, ludicrous without being medicinal bitterness, and of a disappointment greater than what would arise from the non-arrival of a geological catastrophe. Men of this kind would be ever internally troubled even by those poetic accessories which they associate with religious antiquity. They would find a grievance, for instance, in bells, as "molesting quiet neighbours"

"Just in the sweetness of their morning rest."

Nay, the very bird that is a herald of the dawn, for precisely the same reason, might, perhaps, come in with them for its share of obloquy, as Dryden can so wittily suggest in his lines,

"Beast of a bird! supinely when he might
Lie snug and sleep, to rise before the light!
What if his dull forefathers used that cry?
Could he not let a bad example die?"

In fine, there is the race that one really cannot otherwise qualify than that of imbecile or calumniating travellers. Like Belphégor himself, on his infernal mission, in a certain sense,

" ——— tous yeux et tous oreilles,
Grands éplucheurs, clairvoyants à merveilles;
Capables enfin de pénétrer dans tout,
Et de pousser l'examen jusqu'au bout,"

—men that have a smack of all neighbouring languages, and who have swum in a gondola, with a view perhaps all the time to their making a good thing of it in a pecuniary way,—possibly "our own correspondents," as the journals would call them, day after day, in long pedantic articles breaking scurril jests, whose conversation, like their writings, most heathenish and most gross, pageanting us with ridiculous and awkward action, which they pretend to be a likeness, would from a similar cause present rather an obstacle to the attainment of what people on these occasions desire to enjoy. The poet Gray, who was also a traveller, contrasts different governments with each other, and finds them to be the real cause of difference in the aspect of countries through which he passes. He does not, like our intelligent tourists, at present ascribe rags and dirt, bad roads, and want of drainage, to the influence of faith. But views of this kind have progressed, as the Americans would say, since his time. Nevertheless, every one is not foolish enough to be hooked by such lines.

Let one but walk over London Bridge with a young man bent on foreign travel, and one can tell you infallibly whether going over the Rialto at Venice will make him wiser. "There is," continues an old writer, "a race of true British kind which is hurt when transplanted." Men of this solid make are naturally at their wit's end already, and it is an impertinent part to disturb their repose, profound as at first sight it seems to be when saying to each other, like York to Suffolk and the queen "So say you, and you, and I, and now we three have spoke it it skills not greatly who impugns our doom." When they come however, as daws answering nightingales, to disturb our serenity by presenting us with some fusty stuff that they have met with or pretend to have met with, and bidding us conclude, as if the sun were dimmed that gnats do fly in it, I think one may be tempted to say, at least inaudibly, what Lafeu says boldly to Parolles, and that too whether meeting them "or here, or elsewhere, to the farthest verge that ever was survey'd by English

eye,"—"You are a vagabond, and no true traveller," which is less offensive than what Apemantus would add, perhaps,

> "——————— Thou wast told thus!
> Thou gav'st thine ears, like tapsters, that bid welcome
> To knaves and all approachers. 'Tis most just
> That thou turn rascal."

To the intelligent, to the whole race in fact of honest people known to be such, as having experience and equity for their guides, who, when accused by invention, will answer in their honour, the ears meanwhile of these artful and energetic pioneers of civilization are effectually closed.

> "All their abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,
> Severals and generals of grace exact,
> Achievements, plans, orders, preventions,
> Success, or loss, what is, or is not, serves
> As stuff for these travelled gallants to make paradoxes."

In fact, men whose gall coins slanders like a mint, succeed in weakening and discrediting the cause of truth and honesty, matching its adherents in comparisons with dirt; for, in this fashion they do but revive the old character ascribed to the Athenians by one of themselves, who said that his countrymen should never travel excepting when drunk, for that at present whenever they went to Sparta sober they immediately took to looking about them to see what thing they could disturb, so that what the Spartans said they heard not, but what they did not say, this they wrongly suspected, and that they did not make the same report about the same things. All which statement seems verified to the letter in the high-bred, polished, and sagacious wanderers from our shores who visit, or say that they visit, France or Italy, without being, heaven knows, in any other respects like Athenians that had studied in the groves of Academus. Like a book of sport they will read over Catholicity, or as they would buy it, view it limb by limb. But there's more in it than they understand or would lead others to understand.

But we have really sat here too long, and the sun is sinking rapidly. Here's a maze trod, indeed, through forthrights and meanders! We must bid adieu to such protracted converse,

which besides of late has, contrary to our anticipations and pro-
mises at the beginning, grown rather overcast. In truth, it is
contrary also to our custom to hold forth on things of which all
the world speaks. In conclusion of this day's excursion, let
us proceed to observe briefly that the aggregate principles of
which we have been attempting to describe the serene tendency
are calculated not to put heaviness in us, nor to interfere with
even such external pleasures as are incident to our proceedings
in general while we ramble forth, but, on the contrary, to give
zest to them, and to add into the bargain others that are the
best and most durable of all enjoyments.

Of every tree of Paradise excepting one, man was not alone
allowed but even commanded to eat. There were many trees
there fair to behold, and pleasant to eat of. But a certain being
was found there, very spiritual no doubt, and free from the in-
fluences of flesh and blood, to pretend that there was a harsh,
dispiriting, and gloomy discipline instituted, because, forsooth,
there was a solitary exception to this liberty. "You have been
commanded," he said, "not to eat of every tree of Paradise."
An ambiguous way of putting it which might be construed as if
every thing fair and pleasant had really been interdicted. There
are not wanting voices still to misrepresent our condition in this
respect, or to exaggerate its restraints; calling it the result of
slavery, mummery, debasing superstition, and of other such
charming things, however undefined. And yet, as we have
already seen, people subject to it have a spacious charter, heaven
knows, and immense provision for even present happiness of
every kind. True, as before suggested, we must not give dal-
liance too much the reins. We have to teach ourselves that
honourable stop, not to out-sport discretion. But why should
such maxims be interpreted as a prohibition of every thing
"fair to behold and pleasant to partake of?" The principles
at least of which we have been attempting to trace the practical
development, do not seem to be justly responsible for such
views, which appear to some so many mistakes or misrepre-
sentations; there being besides the tradition of manners to
warrant their conclusion. For what said, for instance, the
Christians in the age of Tertullian to the Pagans around them?
"We live with you," they said, "and have the same food, dress,

furniture, and the same wants of daily life; we put not away from us any enjoyment of God's works; we live with you in this world with the same forum, shambles, baths, taverns, shops, inns, and markets." The idea of a proper Christian life in Tertullian's time would not then justify the sort of social isolation which some persons would now represent as necessary or becoming. There is, no doubt, an aggregate of opinions in opposition which pretend to greater liberty. These latter address themselves to the irascible part of nature, to the lion, and to certain other animals, too, for that matter, which are concealed in the composition of man. The former, which the lovers of serene hours must stand by, come nearer to the true man, to his constitutional nature, and to the gentle and loveable side of humanity. One has not, of course, to inquire here which best suits the man who, as Saint-Simon says of Chamillart, "sans rien montrer pense solidement à son salut." But who can doubt which is best adapted for the purpose we have professedly in view, or the most likely to entail the requisite qualifications to enable any one to taste the kind of enjoyment involved in it? "Religion presents no obstacle," says the Count de Maistre, "it cramps and troubles only those who cramp and trouble it. It resembles gunpowder: compress it, and it will lift up the Alps. Let it burn in the open air, and it will yield only light." Now, the spirit of joyful serenity, even when developed in the form we are supposing during all these rambles, does not act as a compression on religion, consequently neither does religion endanger what men have then set their hearts on. It is with man as with the well-trained steed; "nam valde oblectatur mandens frænum." "What say you," asks a French author, "of a bit that one champs with joy? That is the bit which I wish you." And he might have added, the bit which these time-hallowed principles constitute. Accordingly, the same light author appeals to experience and points to the true representatives of its influence living around him. "Yes," he says, "we must honour and envy their devotion. It is a joy, a festival, a grace, an elegance. Have you ever met with any thing more charming? What a happy being! What a chosen creature! In general some people hardly know how many adorable little pleasures

are enjoyed in families that are thus inspired. What shelter i supplied in them to happiness, what precious gifts abound i them*!" The Duc de Saint-Simon on this point has no othe testimony to give, as may be seen in countless passages of hi memoirs, as where speaking of the Duchesse de Noailles, h calls her, "une sainte fort amiable." His religious persons whether young or old, are all thus kind and loveable. Describin the character of the Dauphin, he exclaims, "What tender bu tranquil views! what a magnificent idea of infinite mercy! wha a tempered confidence! what an humble reliance! what a wis serenity! what invincible patience! what sweetness! what constant goodness for all who approached him†!" Do yo think he passed his time less pleasantly for having such a dis cipline? such a bit in his mouth? The truth is, that by th drink of the fountain of grace, which is a consequence of having it, man, as Richard of St. Victor says, is restored to life in hi soul, and enabled to realize peace of heart,—"Sapere enim secundum spiritum vita est et pax‡." Now, as every one knows almost by instinct, what is gravest in the old Christianity amounts but to this: "sapere secundum spiritum," which by no means, we are told, is to be interpreted as seeking to be dis embodied spirits without the passions which God has imparted to our nature; for it is only to think as rational creatures in conformity with that constitution. True, some may seem to push things further in their own case, like poor Evangeline, meek and submissive, and weary with the hopeless search after her lover; some may say to the solemn priest, "Let me remain with thee, for my soul is sad and afflicted." And so it may seem wise and well unto all who are made more impressionable to the deepest considerations involved in faith; but that need not affect you. Spirit is not destructive. It is its antagonist that is. Why, then, be angry with them? why pick a quarrel with these thoughtful men for their cloisters, cowls, chants, and torches, seeking to mitigate earthly cupidities, and to cherish celestial desires? Ah! who knows? Perhaps they had seen

* Jules Janin. † Tom. x. 115.

‡ In Cant. Cantic. xxix.

death very nearly. Perhaps they had seen the shortness of this life in a peculiar way brought before them. Perhaps, as at Ramsgate lately, they had gone down into the cold vaults and moved the coffins of the young man and of the boy. O heavens! angry with them! Why the gayest, lightest, prettiest butterfly amongst our fair companions will have for men of such experience and impressions a tear, a 'salve' full of respect unutterable, not a look of aversion,—sympathy as tender as their own hearts, not scorn and hatred, arising from mistrust about their own condition in consequence, when they behold them in their serenest hours, though believing and hoping all things of others, absorbed, lost, and, except through charity, already passed, in a certain sense, from this world through the intense thought and anticipation of another. It is not, these very men would themselves remind us, and it ought to be repeated again and again, that any one is commanded to endeavour to be all spirit, as if supposing such a state possible. The error that leads to a pretension of that kind has been exposed by others already. No doubt, to cite a burlesque instance, even the gravest person on earth who retains any portion of common sense, would be more disposed to smile than to cavil on hearing the reply, half ironical besides, of our host of the Five Bells at Ouzeley, who, being somewhat of a philosopher, on hearing one say, when stepping into the boat, to leave him, and in allusion to some very innocent dish just demolished, that the only fault to be found with his inn was, that one lived too well in it, said, with a certain air of meek seriousness, as if he had been doing the honours of the Apollo chamber, "Ah! sir, one can't live too well in the short passage of this life!" But this kind of living well, so fraught with temperance and simplicity, as incident to these serene hours, constituting only the apparatus, as the old Latin authors would say, is, after all, understood by those who desire to enjoy them, as being by no means at any time essential, even in that capacity, for the success of their object, and, at all events, as being merely an occasional attendant, part of the mechanism of the thing, as Saint-Simon would say, and not a bad part perhaps, either, when it does follow, but always to be thought of and mentioned last, when it is a question of enjoying

oneself, as even the heathen author that talks of the "apparatus" indicates, and never to be alluded to at any time, or in any order, as entering, unless in the remotest way possible, into the pleasures that are provided for a serene hour. These higher mental enjoyments, which are never to be sacrificed under any circumstances, which can be combined with all recreations, and which, instead of being detrimental, are even conducive to our aptitude for ordinary pleasures, stand out, of course, in point of happiness, by themselves alone. "Boldly I affirm," says Richard of St. Victor, as if grasping the Sicilian jar our poet uses, "that one drop of this honey can effect what all the world could not; that heart which the plenitude of the whole world cannot satiate, one drop of this sweetness will inebriate. That great Alexander, who could subdue the entire world, could not be satisfied. He wanted another world to subdue, and if he could have found that, he would then have wanted still another, and so on for ever, all the while irritated, but not satisfied. What must be then the capacities of that inner world which the exterior orb of the earth, however multiplied, can never satiate? Truly, the philosophers erred in saying that man was a microcosmos, or a lesser world, since the human mind ought rather to be called a greater world, seeing that the whole world cannot fill it. 'Dilata os tuum, et implebo illud *.' Certainly, if in an inordinate way you thirst for earthly delights, and for carnal pleasures, it would be better, even in their interest, for you to contract your mouth than to widen it, to restrain your desire than to extend it, since you can never find wherewithal that way to satisfy it. The mouth of the interior man is your heart's desire; to fill that of the exterior man is no great thing for God to promise or for you to receive, when a morsel of bread is a mouthful; but that mouth of the internal man—that desire of the heart—can never be filled unless by spiritual delights, and blessed is the man who fulfils his desire with them. They will fill your mouth, and your mind, and your house. Dilate, widen, extend the place of your tent; heed not how far you pull the cords, these pleasures will be more than you can hold in your mouth or your mind, or in

* Ps. lxxx.

your tabernacle, for neither would the orb of the whole world suffice to contain them *."

But to what pitch of serenity are these thoughts mounted! To follow them one would have to say the Angelus, without

> "——— hearing that sweet bell from convent towers,
> As if the better world conversed with ours †,"

and repeat such lines as a poet leaves us after uttering it,—

> "Now to the sunset
> Again hast thou brought us;
> And seeing the evening
> Twilight, we bless thee,
> Praise thee, adore thee!
> Father Omnipotent!
> Son, the Life-giver!
> Spirit, the Comforter!
> Worthy at all times
> Of worship and wonder!"

To follow them one would have to seek wings from ancient sacred poetry, and hear the great Adam of St. Victor break forth in some of his immortal strains, as when he says, as if expressly employed in directing such a company of young people as we are supposing present,

> "Consolator alme, veni,
> Linguas rege, corda leni.
> Nihil fellis aut veneni
> Sub tua præsentia.
>
> "Nil jucundum, nil amœnum,
> Nil salubre, nil serenum,
> Nihil dulce, nihil plenum,
> Nisi tua gratia ‡."

What should be added after hearing sounds so majestic, so redolent of joy, and in themselves so beautiful? Where words finish music begins. Here at least is the hour sought for,

* De Missione Spir. Sanct. † Longfellow.
‡ Adam. a St. Victor. Sequentiæ, viii.

"——————— serene as I
Have seen the morning rise upon the spring,
No trouble in her breath, but such a wind
As came to kiss and fan the smiling flowers."

How different all higher things seem now from what they did towards the close of our last excursion, when we heard them criticized, suspected, blamed! The moment seems suited for such a dialogue as the Greek poet represents passing between Cadmus and Agave,—

"First cast your eyes up to this sky.
Well; why do you bid me look at it?
Is it still the same, or think you it is changed?
It is brighter than formerly, and more divine.
Is, then, this fluttering still present to your soul?
I become somehow sobered, changing from my former mind.
How I forget what was said before!
On what account did we say all that?
Ye were mad, and the whole city was deprived of a sound mind with you."

But now approaches the time, as Homer would say, for lying down and taking rest; and those who have spent a long day upon the river and in the groves and meadows need not to be reminded of it,

"For the night is come,
And in azure dome
The stars their vigils keep,
The reeds in the stream
In silence dream,
And the dew-kiss'd flowers sleep *."

Perhaps, still thinking about what has lately occupied them, they may wish to turn their late talk to a good private account, and feel somewhat in regard to it in the same disposition as was the unassuming Frenchman, when, after completing his book, he said, "Thank God, my history is finished—I must now go and learn it myself," which another might change to "practise it my-

* Hood.

self," as would perhaps well become even some of our poor excursionists. I wish we may have succeeded in treating the subject so as to answer the description contained in the old drama, where to one who says, "I hope you have made no dark sentence in't; for I'll assure you our audience commonly are very simple, idle-headed people; and if they should hear what they understand not, they would quite forsake us,"—it is answered, "O, ne'er fear it; for what I have written is both witty to the wise and pleasing to the ignorant."

To be sure, one could not have pushed off from shore on our very first morning when we started on this series of merry expeditions, anticipating exactly such a discussion as that we have been engaged in all this day; but then, you know, as Lord Bacon remarks, "the mind is brought to any thing better, and with more sweetness and happiness, if that whereunto you pretend be not first in the intention, but 'tanquam aliud agendo,' because of the natural hatred of the mind against necessity and constraint." However, it has come off at last, and our discussion about such matters is ended. I wish it may have been talk with a conclusion that might be expressed somewhat in the merry words of the converted Benedick,—"Yes, when I said I would die as I was, I did not think I should live till I were what I am now."

> "Hark! the cadence dies away,
> The river's bank you scarcely see,
> The boatmen rest their oars, and say,
> 'Miserere, Domine!'"

So, with silent resolutions, "and I like the word," says a great orator, the term elsewhere employed would be "deliberation,"—resolution is the promise to act: it is a word expressive, manly, and Christian,—so in a state of mind, I say, that may be thus qualified, bending low over the oars, they pull to the boat's harbour, and thence return weary but delighted to their homes. To you who have yielded to the influences that moulded them, we may apply, without the gift of prophecy, the words of the sage,—"Dormies, et suavis erit somnus tuus."

CHAPTER XVII.

T is not always the most picturesque scenery that leaves the most pleasing impressions. Even your artist is the child of circumstance. What is there to be admired on the Surrey bank of the Thames, for instance, between the Lock and Pope's Villa, with its hollow cave, σπεῖος γλαφυρόν, where you might have read formerly, with a slight substitution of words to suit our general purpose,

> "Let such, such only, tread this sacred floor,
> Who dare to love all mankind, and be poor?"

On this reach of the river there is only to be seen a long high embankment of shingle, forming the towing-path; while even on the Middlesex shore, for some way at least, an equally long and uniform line of willow stumps and bushes is all that is opposed to it. And yet, when the day is fine, in June or July, if your company suits, there can be nothing,—for the reason that here you first find solitude after leaving Richmond,—more charming in the whole wide world than to scull your boat up the Strawberry Hill side, keeping under the shade of the branches all the way, and stopping from time to time to slide from your bench and sit on the bottom of the boat, chatting at the feet of some one, or hearing some one chat to you "de omnibus rebus;" though perhaps all the while without any prodigious stretch of thought, for the reason that, as some one says, "loving is a substitute for thinking,—love being, you know, an ardent forgetfulness of the rest." A little further on, if fortune favour you, as she is likely in one way to do during excessive heat, which keeps others at home, and as your companion can be put to shore under a grateful shade if the case require it, there will be no legal or social obstacle to your having a swim across the river; and then, for a place of regular pulling up at, you have Kemp's renowned harbour within sound

of the rushing waters of the weir, with his wayside inn and arbours, where you may learn what a confined space suffices to form a garden, and in what a small house you can have a great appetite, to say nothing of what you may qualify as that found in the Jew of Malta's casket,—

"Infinite riches in a little room,"

and under what common forms of obscure life you can be put without counsel in instant possession of the more than princely inheritance of a serene hour. Do your busy and restless people ask, with the friends of Jules Janin, when he retired to his little garden at Passy, "What on earth are you going to do in the midst of your few feet of grass-plot? I say 'feet' in a hurry, lest to-morrow it should be illegal to mention them, being threatened as we are with the *mètre*, that little rascal who turns out a liar after all, as a French savant has demonstrated. What are you going to do? You are going to do what you like best of all things,—to chat, to think, for that comes after,—to hear 'Rossignoler tout mes moineaux,' and to discover within the ten yards of this enclosure that there are more flowers, and blossoms, and beauties than you can count*." Our English poet goes even farther, saying,

"I fly from pomp, I fly from plate!
I fly from falsehood's specious grin;
Freedom I love, and form I hate;
And choose my lodging at an inn.
Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn."

But at what inn? Why at such a one, I promise you, as where no young gentle landlady, just wedded to her lord, and inexperienced in the results that elsewhere often attend such housekeeping, will be for invoking a rainy day to keep at home your bloated wassailers of affluent fortune, whose idea of serenity consists in partaking abundantly of the costliest wines. Here a

* Les Contes du Chalet.

gentle hostess would be only anticipating and seeing the arrival of very harmless young people, with but a trifle of money, who are neither a trouble to her nor to themselves, and who may be heard confessing that they love a quiet privacy above all the splendour and the roar of fortune.

Cicero says, somewhere or other, that nothing in a discourse so much pleases the multitude as order. I wish authors would profit by the remark then, will say rather maliciously some one, to whom I may seem to walk through thickets at hap-hazard, or, as Patru says, "brousser à l'aveugle." But you are deceived, sir, we reply, we lose not our time; we keep to the point all through; for the truth is, whatever critics of a certain kind may pretend, we are following a very strict order, when, after finishing the subject which occupied us on our last ramble, we propose for our discussion to-day the need of moderation, in order to enjoy serene hours in the possession and exercise of truth. You are tired of "the little room?"

> "Be it so, companion; find you out a bed,
> For I upon this bank will rest my head;
> Or let one turf serve as pillow for us both;
> One heart, one bed, two bosoms and one troth."

"We cannot estimate," says Guizot, "the force of conscientious illusions incident to a mind weak and ardent, ordinary and elevated, mystically vague and subtle." There is no want of examples to verify these words, whether we look to history or merely around us at what is daily passing, seen, read, and heard,—aye! even here in London.

It falls not to our province to speak of the graver evils that attend an extravagant zeal and an inordinate passion for truth, of which the full knowledge is reserved for another life. Those consequences are so terrible, that there is no want of people, one way or another influenced, to point them out. Ours is a more humble task. It is only to observe that the disposition itself to which these results can be traced, even though these should not follow from it in every case, is, whatever it may be good for in other respects, totally subversive of the enjoyment of a serene hour, of which the very amusements, indeed, declare as much; for those afflicted with such a temperament might well demand,

in the words of our old poet, if they had a momentary interval of sane judgment,

> "Say in a dance how shall we go,
> That never could a measure know?
> How shall we sing to please the scene
> That never yet could keep a mean?"

In the first place, this turn of mind towards an unproportioned excess is what may be called a besetting fault incident to every nature of which serenity is not the normal condition; consequently, it is the more to be guarded against while the advantages to be obtained by cultivating a contrary temper are exposed; since it is not unreasonable to believe in the possibility of men being trained to enter into an enjoyment of which at one period they knew nothing.

> "Les hommes la plupart sont étrangement faits,
> Dans la juste nature on ne les voit jamais:
> La raison a pour eux des bornes trop petites,
> En chaque caractère ils passent ses limites;
> Et la plus noble chose, ils la gâtent souvent,
> Pour la vouloir outrer et pousser trop avant."

It seems easier to be moved, in the first instance, to follow truth and adopt corresponding manners, than to restrain people once entered on that sweet, happy road, from striking off from it to make for some point of excess that lies at a distance from it. One of the holy fathers remarks that when God called Abraham to serve Him, He only spoke in soft accents, saying, "Abraham;" but that when He forbade him to slay his own son through devotion, He had to shout out to him, "exclamavit, dicens Abraham, Abraham!" Mortals, in regard to things divine, are of course always more or less ignorant; and ignorance is vehement, inconsiderate, rash, destructive. "Sterility of mind," says M. de Latena, "produces obstinacy. When a man has only one idea, he will cling to it." No harm in that, but one may add he will hold to it with such a fear and agony, exclusive of all other things, that he can only speak in exclamations. "Non enim possum quin exclamem," he cries out every moment. There's less noise in a steeple upon a coronation.

Do you think it advisable to have such a companion for
serene hour? The reply of a certain humourist's countryman
rude as it is in sound, contains an answer sufficient for ou
purpose, "No, t'ant."

What can be done with you, I should like to know, if you b
a man of immoderate views, when we want to enjoy a sweet
calm moment or two? We should never agree perfectly excep
in thinking that you and we were extremely unfit to continu
embarked in the same bottom together. You possess the know
ledge of much truth, let us suppose; you may know, theoreti
cally at least, even all the points that were involved in what w
were suggesting the last day we were together. So far we be
lieve nothing can be more desirable. But yet I discommen
your wit; for, as Gonzalo says, "the truth you now speak do
lack some gentleness and time to speak it in." "Qui mentis es
duræ, corruet in malum*." These hard and inflexible minds,
all events, don't bring much serenity with them. As is said
La Mennais, "All that is moderate appears to them insipi
They understand nothing but principles and rigorous conse
quences, an exact system, absolute logic, a complete world, alt
gether one thing or the other. Good all on one side and evil
the opposite, there must be an instant separation. No mixture
An idea of holiness or of malediction must rest on whatev
they love or reject; they adore or they abhor; they bless or th
execrate †." Moreover, your man of serene hours, like the wis
man of the Père Boutauld, has no resolutions that, like their
are invariable. As they are attached to circumstances dependen
on time and fortune, he knows that they ought to be change
according as the changes and movements of the world depriv
them of the conformity which they had to reason ‡; whereas
your troubler of serenity comes ready prepared with all hi
measures and compasses, though predetermined, by means of
little skill in using them, to find you wrong with all your co
temporaries on every subject, whatever you may advance an
demonstrate. As Sainte-Beuve says of some one exclusivel
attached to ancient times, your fanatic retires grumbling, an

* Prov. xxviii.

† Sainte-Beuve.

‡ Les Conseils de la Sagesse, 75.

shuts his window-blinds, and henceforth only opens those that front the setting sun. Nor is this all the difference between the serene and your people of hard and inflexible minds. If one of the latter, you think forsooth that, let the subject be what it will, all persons must be prepared, at the moment you speak, to adopt your thoughts, and perhaps to follow you through questions of art and philosophy as through sacred ground, even when those thoughts by their excess become false and one-sided. You are leaving all landmarks embarked on the ocean of your own fancy, and drifting just as the tide of passion directs you; and every one must be in the same boat with you. Here's a to-do if any one demurs! "How now!" will some Lucetta have a right to exclaim in her turn, when hearing your declamations,

> "——— Oh! you are too flat,
> And mar the concord with too harsh a descant."

But then you say, perhaps, to justify your absolutism, that we must hear what such and such great authorities have pronounced. Well, we may respect those ancients as much as you do; but what is the use sometimes of citing certain authors who wrote under the exigencies which no longer perhaps exist, and "quorum consilium quale fuit nihil sane ad hoc tempus?" "I have always desired to have to do with people of serene minds," says a celebrated novelist, "from feeling that I had need of their patience, and that I wanted the assistance of their wisdom."

Some people are extravagant in their speculative views, others in their morality. We find an example of the former in one whom we have followed throughout these excursions with unfeigned reverence; but he need not fear an inventory of such faults as our eyes can detect in him. The passage however ought, with permission, to be noticed, as it appears to be a fair instance of the kind of exaggeration that should certainly in general, according to our ideas, be guarded against. After saying, then, that there are three vanities or mutabilities; that the first is in man, and the second in what man does, he proceeds—with what will seem to some persons a boldness that might disturb to impatience any serenity of mind—to say that the third "is in what has been done for man." The vanity of

mortality, as viewed by itself, people in general admit; th vanity of curiosity may be conceded; but who can be prepare to grant immediately, as he requires, "the vanity of all thing made for man, as time itself, which will have an end? for w may believe," he continues, "that neither will the firmamer alway revolve, nor the planets move, nor the clouds fly, nor th rivers flow, nor the wind blow, nor the earth germinate, nor th animal produce *." And so with the end of these things vanit is to cease! Does this seem a right way of treating God work? Who knows, however, what this great intelligenc meant by vanity in this passage? Be that as it may, we hav not to go back to the eleventh century, when perhaps it wa least existing, to find examples of the exaggeration that is un friendly to our especial purpose. Violent neophytes, intrepi catechumens, who have not sucked in truth by little and litt at different times, and from childhood, but who have become it self-appointed champions all at once, sometimes expose thei selves to criticism of this kind. Grave and eloquent me having to make a discourse, will sometimes at the present da select some one subject, doctrine, or principle, in itself no dou vital, but which expands under their treatment so as to imped organs as vital, and consequently to become detrimental to th mental serenity of those who hear or even remember them. The cut and divide only to thicken and extend it; they stretch it develope it, make it to involve all elements, and so it grows c their hands till it attains to such a disproportioned magnitud that it leaves room logically for nothing else but itself und the cope of heaven. Every thing is sacrificed to nourish an extend it; plainest dictates of common sense, exigencies of abs lute necessity, clearest and most undisputed texts of all th Scriptures, even the grand whole of religion viewed in its pe fection in the light of love, all are but impalpable atoms in it way. Onwards it moves, hastens, rushes, impelled by th breath of the rhetorician and its own fantastic momentum, ti it is lost to view in infinite space, where before, behind, above and below it there is a vacuum in which it reigns paramount having subdued to itself all things.

* Rich. S. Vict., In Apocalyps. lib. iii. c. 7.

It is the same even in tangible, every-day matters; for some men are ultra in every thing. "To be ultra," says a great author, "is to go beyond the mark. It is to attack the sceptre in the name of the throne, and the mitre in the name of the altar; it is to get wrong in harness, to insult through excess of respect, to find not sufficient Catholicity in the Pope, not enough sanctity in the priest, not enough royalty in the king. It is on the score of whiteness to find fault with the swan and the lily; it is to be a partisan of things to such a degree as to become their enemy; it is to be so much for as to be against." Not much serenity with such companions, if they suspect you of being less impassioned than themselves. "Oh! you are for moderate views, are you? Hem! I thought as much." You may depart now about your business; you are out of their good books ever after. But the truth is, "every fancy," says Balzac, "that comes across some men's brains seems to them to involve the interest of God. This man's chief fault," he adds, alluding to one of his contemporaries, "was an excess of subtlety. He had too much of what raises and excites, and too little of what strengthens and consolidates. Even his repose was agitated. He used to dictate while he dined, and to sleep with his eyes open. He should have heard the advice that was given to one in ill-health. Try to thicken your blood; temper the fire by a little phlegm. Don't make use of all your reason. Be not all intelligence, all light. Make yourself an animal sometimes, or at least like one. Stop at the nearest object, and enjoy it to-day without tormenting yourself about the morrow. Don't overwhelm your mind by this infinite forethought. Did you never hear of the soul of that philosopher which used to travel out of its body? One day that this vagabond soul wished to return to it there was no finding it, the body had been murdered. The sense of the fable is to teach us that if we wish to live we must not detach ourselves altogether from the body, nor separate ourselves from what is substantial, as if we could gain every thing by subtlety. Now and then let us take a northern instead of an oriental soul; a little more earthen and less fiery, not one of which the flame is so subtle that it seems to be illusion rather than truth."

It was therefore on the whole no unwise stipulation when

Pliny, though he was a pagan, writing to Catilius to accept h invitation, said, "Let our entertainment, consisting, as you pr pose, in philosophical discussions, be conducted also with mod ration." We don't want to have with us sticklers for cro chets, broaching strong opinions every moment, which the maintain "unguibus et rostro." "Beware of systems," sa M. de Sacy, adding, as an instance of the consequence th attended a passion for them in recent times, "I think you w admit that it would have been better eventually for La Menna had he been from the first even one of those poor Gallica whom he pursued so fiercely and unmercifully, and who, for a their views, were ready, as events proved, to suffer death a day rather than violate their fidelity to the holy see," accordi to those principles which, as Saint-Simon observes, when occ sion comes for defending them, "are true alike on the two sid of both the Alps and Pyrenees." In questions of history, t which are often started while people are chattering in hours amusement, there is the same necessity for avoiding system though some that I need not name, who are now in the bo with us, may have been rather hastily accused of having fall into that pit, as if they had given out the middle ages for th uninterrupted reign of peace and charity upon earth, whic they really never did, or at least meant to do, having in fact no time any system in their heads which required for its sup port such an idle sacrifice of historical truth.

Others again seen by the optics of ordinary mortals see extravagant in morality; and this is a danger which come more home to every one of us. For we all have to suffer in ou skins when truth of this kind is exaggerated, and one has t deal with persons who are in the right unjustly, and who hav reason in an unreasonable way. Where party or a factio spirit reigns, as generally with people of this unfortunate tur moderation and equity will pass, during a while at least, for vi weakness, time-serving, and pusillanimity, or for something pe haps even worse. Speaking of the Cardinal Francis Morosin the Pope's legate at Paris, who endeavoured to appease th troubled and angry spirits of both parties in France, De Tho says, "that minds were so exasperated both within and witho the kingdom, that on returning, his moderation was generall

condemned, and he actually incurred blame for not having rather kindled the fire of revolt. At that time," he adds, "gentleness and prudence were regarded as qualities out of season, and those who by such inestimable talents could contribute to union and peace, were looked upon as men deserving public hatred*." Similarly, De Thou himself was blamed for having, by the king's order, laboured to reconcile violent dispositions, for speaking of the Huguenots with moderation, and rendering them the justice which is due to all the world; for, he adds, "imbued with a new doctrine, many people flattered themselves that divine Providence would favour their enterprises, and that they could prove the truth of religion by cabals and conspiracies, by wars and massacres†." De Thou incurred much blame for his habit of cultivating acquaintance with learned and remarkable men of all parties. No doubt he was in consequence led sometimes into error, by representations that were not in accordance with exact truth; but one can hardly avoid sympathizing with him when he speaks of being traduced by violent and malicious people, for contracting friendship with Scaliger, by whose immense erudition he sought to profit. He cites in his own defence the example of illustrious Catholics, who had enjoyed the society of that great scholar, becoming thereby, as he says, more learned, without being less attached to the religion of their ancestors; but, he adds, "people are now so unfortunate as to suppose that religion, which formerly used to make progress from day to day, by faith, and charity, and confidence in the goodness of God, can defend itself at the present day only by the counsels of flesh and blood, by intrigue and plotting, and false views of policy, and a practical disbelief in the will or power of divine Providence. I own," he says, "that I consider my friendships cheaply purchased by incurring the reproaches of such intemperate and ill-directed people‡." In our times critics of the same kind are not wanting, and a contemporary well describes them, remarking that under an air of self-control passion escapes from such men in traits of a cold contempt or of a bitter hatred. As M. de Sacy says, "all the

* Mém. de J. A. De Thou, an. 1589.

† Ad an. 1593.

‡ Ibid. 1571.

pride that the heart of man can contain overflows in their pages, or, what concerns us more, who seldom read them, in thei looks; "all violent passions boil within them." They can d nothing without being in a rage. Tell them of Fontenelle, wh during a life that lasted ninety years, was never once mad angry, and it will be worth while to see with what looks the receive your communication. But what can be done with suc people on a summer evening's excursion? The least evil wil be to have to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters o English; for happily our mother tongue, at least hitherto, ha not been so often practised this way as that of some continenta neighbours. But this sort of mental and moral extravagance as Cicero wisely says of something analogous, "non risu potiu quam oratione ejiciendum." Yet formerly even on the continen it was discountenanced. "J'aime la prédication que ressent pl l'amour du prochain," says St. Francis de Sales, furnishing a example, "que l'indignation, voire même des Huguenots, qu faut traiter avec grand compassion." It is not merely that thes "tempests of devotion," as Balzac styles them, may often driv people out of the world whose duty it was to remain in it, as i the instance that he says used to be cited by a great saint of hi time, of one so driven, in spite of real obligations, to a retre of Carmelites; it is that they can actually involve in despa the minds over which they sweep. "It is a dangerous pre sumption," says Richard of St. Victor, "to trust in one's genius and to lay down the law in things which the greatest mind have left, not untouched, but undefined*." "Is it not better, he asks, "humbly to confess that we cannot understand som words of our Lord, rather than by our exposition of them t drive others to desperation? If by expositions of this kind th ox or the ass should fall into the pit of despair, I fear," he adds "lest the Lord of these animals may require the price of animal men from the hands of such a doctor who has precipitated then into it†." Of course he retains his own serenity all the while such as it is, and little thinks of what results to others from his "utterances;" but so it is in nature too; for, as our old poe says, "Alas! what knows the head of a calm river whom th

* De Spiritu Blasphemiæ. † Ibid.

feet have drowned?" "There are persons," says our great mystic elsewhere, "pusillanimous, who if harshly reproved for sins, are so overwhelmed with the weight of fear, that they sink into a state of mortal sadness; so that great discretion is needed in acting with them, lest we should do more harm than good*." Why seek always to break the bruised reed and to quench the smoking flax? Is that the way to obtain a voucher for being respectable? "Hair," says Richard again, "can be cut off without pain, but not torn up by the roots. So the movements of the flesh ought to be cut off in superfluous things, and tolerated in things of necessity; and hence the Levites were ordered to shave off, but not to tear up by their roots, the hair of their flesh; for we should moderate those passions which we cannot extirpate†." Philto in Plautus, whose words, so Christian, so sacerdotal even, on another point, we heard on our last ramble, leaves an example that some gruff people besides your Paterfamilias might follow with advantage in the interest of their own and other persons' serene hours. "I could," he says rather unexpectedly to his son, when talking to him about his proposed poor romantic marriage, 'without' a sixpence,' as your economists would say—"I could give utterance to many a learned saying, and very fluently too, let me tell you; this old age of mine retains stories without end of ancient and recent times. But though I have been opposed to you hitherto, from thinking what is best for myself and with my ideas, I thus give my final decision, Yes, I permit you; ask for the girl and marry her. These things are not for the best, nor as I think they ought to be; but still they are better than that which is downright bad. Besides, no one should counsel nothing else but that which pleases himself alone. Such a one only plays the fool for his pains, becomes wretched in mind, and yet is no nearer bringing about what he wishes." Decidedly this old Philto, if he had been born in Christian times, would have made a capital companion for one of these excursions, had he trusted himself to such company or in such a boat as ours, which may indeed be doubted.

Then again, men should consider that, as we have just heard

* In Apocalyps. i. c. 5. † De Verbo incarnato.

suggested, extravagance in every relation defeats its own object, so that, after all, those who indulge in it give up their serenity for nothing. It is the property of excess, in every thing, as a French author remarks, to be equally fatal both by itself and by the contrary excess to which it leads.

> "—— Extremes are not the means
> To change estates, either in good or ill."

Besides, taking another view, "a disputant," says Johnson, "destroys his own authority by claiming too many consequences, or extending too far his proposition; as a prince adds fortress to fortress, till despair turns his enemies upon him, and he loses in a moment the glory of a reign. Philosophers, finding an easy victory over self-created desires, proceeded to make further inroads upon the heart, and attacked at last our senses and our instincts. They made war upon nature, and lost the trophies of their former combats." Of course they did, Balzac replies, taking up, as it were, the thread of his argument, and expressing himself in these words: "When you too closely press your adversary with too much violence, this violence causes him to be pitied, and the people to turn against you; the visible superiority of your discourse obtains for him the protection of his readers; so strange is the humour of men. I conclude therefore that to win the day you ought not to use all your force on all occasions, or against all kinds of enemies. Besides, there are walls in so bad a state that there is no need of cannon to be brought against them. There are such weak bodies that they fall of themselves, without your pushing them. It is a mockery to go forth in full armour against sick men and ruins. And even when there is occasion for using all our strength, let us never forget that there are limits laid down by honour beyond which one cannot go without going too far. Never let us lose respect for merit and the condition of a great adversary. It is not sufficient to be a just and legitimate enemy; one must be a civil and generous enemy. Whether we defend ourselves or attack others, let us try to act without wounding charity or violating the rights of men. What think you of Scaliger's abuse of Erasmus? Why, when all is said and done, you acquit his victim whom he styles 'triparricida,' inventing a word ex-

pressly for him, and you conclude that he himself is only an exaggerator, a declaimer, and a comedian."

Let us observe now, as lovers of a serene holiday in a common way, which by no means excludes a graver title if any one desires it, what are the advantages of the disposition to which all this extravagance is opposed. It is not to be denied, in commencing its praises, that like every thing else, even this admirable temper can be often abused, especially where there is a secret motive for its being so, which is often the case. There may sometimes be excess in proposing to avoid what exceeds. It is not every thing great that is out of proportion. An old writer produces what he calls a theological barometer, mounting up from ignorance through persecution, wrath, and zeal, to the best point, which he designates as the true spirit of right-minded people, and of the Church, and then from that point of perfection descending by the degrees of moderation, lukewarmness, and infidelity to ignorance or the same state as that from which it set out; so placing the true point in the middle of the scale between zeal and moderation, thereby implying that there is a kind of moderation which is a descent in a wrong direction. No doubt the kind of moderation he had in his thoughts may be so considered. It often belongs to those who are rightly suspected of being traitors in a camp, who evince not unfrequently what Chateaubriand qualified in M. de Salvandy as being "de la fougue dans la modération." There's no want of it at the present day in all conscience; but, indeed, for that matter, there have never been wanting minds to accuse goodness of hypocrisy, and wisdom of extravagance. Let me whisper a secret into your ear. We ourselves may be tempted to do all this every day, especially after achieving something we feel to be wrong while trying to put a bold face on it. There have been Lucians among us to ridicule the religious orders, and readers of the Tartuffe to rechristen holy and wise men and women in the world under a very false name. We all know this fact, and without any peculiar gift of penetration can account for it. But still, as Richard of St. Victor says, let us be ever so heroic, or, rather, precisely because we wish to be heroic, "all things ought to be cautiously treated and so guarded, 'ut non solum

sint ordinati sed etiam moderati*.'" There is no want of reasons and, what is better, of generous instincts, to prove the wisdom and goodness of this caveat. For it is not alone a serene element, but a very glorious disposition when one is born with a character to make people fall in love with this lofty moderation, which, as Vauvenargues says, has never yet been defined, which is neither indolence, nor phlegm, nor mediocrity of genius, nor coldness of temperament, nor effort of reasoning, but an instinct superior to all the chimeras which hold the world enchanted. In the first place, as in purely mental operations, it is generally by moderation that men can best accomplish the moral, religious, as well as the positive and material ends they have in view. This is true in every thing,—in regulating manners, in painting pictures, in making speeches; for Cicero says, "that even the tone of voice must be moderate," in writing scientific works, in practising medicine, and in reducing morality to action in life. Moderation, in fact, signifies regard to a principle of all existence, which is proportion. As Ruskin says, "Man can perform hardly any act of his life, can hardly utter two words of innocent speech, or move his hand in accordance with those words, without involving some reference, whether taught or instinctive, to the laws of proportion." Viewing it, however, in its lowest and most familiar sense, we see its importance every day. In treating the body, for instance, the greatest physicians are the most moderate in their remedies. Young practitioners, forgetting the poverty of Hippocrates with respect to his pharmacopœia, think they can cure at once by strong measures and the power of modern chemical discoveries; age and experience render them different in that respect. It is the same in forming manners as in conducting minds; it is not the forward slashing style that will effect most. "Before Seneca and Plutarch came into the world," says Balzac, getting the start in the observation of our greatest Shakspearian critics, our Coleridges, our Schlegels, and our Hunts, "the wisest men sought to gain, not to force others, because they knew that their noble nature is impatient of a yoke, and has a horror of naked

* Benjamin Minor, 66.

reason and of purely dogmatic teaching. Wise and prudent as they were, they took, as it were, the masks and dresses of the theatre, and were not the less wise and prudent for doing so. They disguised themselves as poets, comic and satirical. The senators, when they sought to instruct the world, laid aside their long robe, and invented a kind of jargon half Greek and half Latin, half prose and half verse; and with this jargon, which sets at defiance uniformity of style and precepts of art, they delivered divine and human wisdom in works which the masters of art have admired as wonderful, though they were not regular. O ye solid minds that compose books, and that judge of books, how little you know of this kind of writing! How this noble and delicate manner fills me with disgust for your vulgar and insipid seriousness! how it makes me hate this imperturbable gravity in which you stiffen yourselves as if you had vowed never to lay it aside! I like one sharp grain of our friends, one mouthful of their ragouts, more than all your rivers of milk and honey, and all your mountains of brown sugar and confectionery."

But, to come to what we should attend to in a more especial manner, do you think it possible that patience,—without which one can do nothing, though one were only on the river pulling against the stream, or fishing, or out hunting with horses and hounds, or playing at chess, or bowls, or any other game in the garden, or arguing, when it is absolutely necessary to argue, with a girl, or taking up this book for want of something else to while away the time,—should not be necessary in the cause of truth and virtue? The habit of being easily made angry with men for their opinions and actions does not suit the river or the purpose of those who seek enjoyment on it; and the fact is, that in general men should be held responsible every where, whatever may be the subject of their talk, only for what they say in formal terms. "Daily," says M. de Sacy, "we meet spiritualists who materialize without knowing it, and vice versâ. Philosophy (within the limits of which our excursionists so often wander) except in matters of science is a tower of Babel, much talking and no one understanding what another says,—the same words perhaps used, but each person attaching a different sense to the same." Under such circumstances, what can

be gained in that region of thought by impatience and sentences of proscription and condemnation? Is it not the same in morals and theology, within which domains every one's thoughts will rove? Balzac at least was of that opinion, for he says, "Besides, such names as heretic, schismatic, enemy of the Church, deserter and rebel to the Church, are terms which cause a kind of anger that is not allied with generosity. They make wild those whom you want to tame. Passion, too, sometimes peeps out in the use of such words; and this passion, though I believe it good and legitimate, will not be approved of by such critics at least as Castelvetro. I would rather," he adds, "follow in this one respect the example of the Greeks, who, on such occasions, use only the gentlest terms. They never insult those who are separated, nor give them odious names; they are content with calling them people of a different opinion. M. de Foix, the king's ambassador at the court of Pope Gregory XIII., writes, saying, 'I represented to the holy father how those of the new opinions,' &c. This M. de Foix was a personage of great birth, rare virtue, and eminent learning, who always knew right well what he was about." So, young master in utroque, none of your sneers for him.

Then, again, as Richard of St. Victor says, speaking as if with an especial view to what serenity requires, "times, and circumstances, and persons must always be considered; for as all cannot do all things, so neither are all expedient for all. For often what is in itself a greater good is less expedient to some, and what in itself is less is more expedient to others; for sometimes and often what is destructive to one is the occasion of salvation to another, and what to some is an increase of merit and recompense, is to others a cause of ruin, as when we see many fall from the sublime who in a lower place used to stand bravely*." In spite of this last grave authority, perhaps you persist in thinking that all this is merely talking like ignorant holiday people only intent on being merry and untroubled. But if so, you are in error, let me tell you. We are not left without other great examples to direct us to adopt this moderation. The compilers of ecclesiastical law, for instance, who can hardly be

* De Statu Interioris Hominis, lib. i. c. 28.

thought in league with people of our turn, when relating the decretal of Gregory IX., "De treuga et pace," add, "But this is no longer observed, because this truce does not belong to the manners of our age*." So you see what sanction lovers of the serene have for saying what they utter on this point. The Count de Maistre accordingly used to affirm that the most useful book for men to consult is the almanack, in order to bear in mind in what age of the world they are living. But at all times the counsels of men worth listening to have been for adaptations, condescensions, rational, gentle measures, and for that moderation which hours in fact of every kind demand. "Gentlemen Catos," says Balzac, "be not too exalted or too just. Do not attach yourself to that savage virtue rigorous and philosophic, so as not when occasion requires to be able to leave it for one more virtuous, more humane, more gentle, and popular." Zeno, the Stoic, in one point at least showed himself eligible as a member of the serene brotherhood, for he forbade either praying for riches or deprecating them, though he still recommended chiefly what was commonly accessible and less superfluous; "in order," as Athenæus says, "that men having their minds formed so as neither to fear nor to admire any thing which is not honourable on the one hand or discreditable on the other, should use only what is natural as much as possible, and yet should not fear or condemn what is of an opposite character; for nature admits of all conditions, and has banished nothing†." So he prescribed moderation in all social views, and a due regard to all classes. No doubt imperfections will surround you; but if you are for excess while opposed to them, you may mistake them not a little, and adopt views in consequence respecting some things that, being contrary to the divine ideal, can never be conducive to your own serenity. "In natural philosophy," as a great French author says, "there is no idea more false than that which consists in believing that to find what nature desires, we must find perfection, as we understand it, in each of the beings that compose it. Is it not the same in regard to the philosophy of life? Let us take heed, for such a notion leads to

* Glossa Ordinaria, Greg. IX. 1, tit. 381, prior to the year 1266.
† Lib. vi.

nothing short of demanding the secret of creation, and why God who is perfect has produced a world which necessarily cannot be perfect in the same absolute way. Is it not more consoling and more satisfactory to the understanding to consider nature and human life as a vast aggregate, and in general immensely harmonious, where each thing, after eliminating positive evil, of which the existence must be granted, is well in its place? The universe is not a continued scale, but a vast empire of an unalterable beauty and fecundity, where nature is made to produce, as if in play, all imaginable forms, being limited, as Cuvier says, only by organic incompatibilities, that is, by the absurd."

Upon the whole, then, it is easy to collect from what has preceded, that the dispositions and the persons required, whenever it is an occasion of seeking a serene hour in a juvenile or, indeed, in any other way, must be such in this respect as the wisest and greatest men have always possessed, and always praised,—being satisfied with admiring those who differed in an exalted sense from this type, as constituting a sort of divine animals, and resolved, as being themselves only reasonable creatures, upon not imitating them to the letter; "which," continues Balzac, "were the very expressions used by Alexander Piccolomini when in conversation with me as we passed by Sienna." In requiring this state of mind no one will be at a loss to find suitable comrades either among the gay or the grave.

"Lenior et melior fis accedente senecta."

Gentler and better, you perceive, the poet in this line seems to consider as commutable terms; and his prediction, by the way, was verified even in Nicole of recent memory; for in his latter years, as the Abbé de Saint-Pierre could testify, that terrible tenor showed himself in the character of a theologian who had become milder in his views; his conversation on one occasion furnishing a happy proof of the final moderation of his sentiments. But youth, too, at least in a way of its own, for all its flashes, loves gentleness, and, in the way of wise old age itself too, recoils from the idle war of uncertain opinions and the troubles and absurdities of mental and moral extravagance. There is also the humourist, whom all our excursionists more

or less take after, who is sure to be a man of moderation, and so far eminently a fit and proper companion. For, as a remarkable French writer says, "Humour is neither sobbing nor laughing, neither smiles nor tears; it is both together. The humourist looks on life, sees that it resembles a comedy, and he is gay; he thinks at the same time that this comedy is serious, and he grows sad: Janus with two faces, at once Heraclitus and Democritus; one who laughs, and one who weeps. He oscillates between smiles and tears. He takes no pleasure in reasoning falsely, but he likes to be pleasant on matters that are thought grave; and he discourses gravely on things that are in appearance frivolous. For, from the point of view whence he regards life, every thing in life, and life itself, is both laughable and grave, light and serious. The humourist is the critic who sighs interiorly and laughs externally, who affects gaiety and insensibility from distrusting his own sensibility. He rallies the bark of existence wandering often at hap-hazard, but his raillery has nothing of insult for the passengers. He is on board along with them, and from the emotion of his voice it is easy to perceive that in spite of his laughing he has pity on others and on himself. At the bottom it is a serious philosopher, but he is not more a pedant than a sceptic. Where there is no necessity he does not like to dogmatize. He gives birth to more just ideas than he expresses; and he instructs while he is playful*."

But, as already suggested, we may have more solid companions still in the boat with us, who are not the less likely to fulfil the conditions, as if following the example of that great cardinal du Perron, who was said to have always "dipped his pen in good sense." The Count de Maistre, for instance, since the last publication of his writings, appears, under a changed form, to have been himself eminently qualified for such hours. He is presented to us now, as it were, by himself, and he comes forward as the circumspect publicist, the friend of middle terms, of necessary innovations, of the limitation of power, and the liberty of custom. He expressly says, indeed, "However strong may be my language, believe me that the thoughts are very

* Louis Ratisbonne, Impressions littéraires.

moderate, and very submissive to the thoughts of those wh think better than myself." M. de Sacy accordingly says that h finds in the letters of M. de Maistre what he never expected find, the man "le plus moderne" that it is possible to imagin pitiless only in his logic. "I am convinced," he says, "no that in spite of his theories, he would have made a bad inqu sitor, and that Louis XI., who could know his man, wou never have chosen him for his grand prévôt. M. de Maist wished to belong to a different age by his ideas. He was of h own by the inclination of his heart." Balzac proposes even th example of St. Chrysostom, which some are still found to folio without knowing Greek. Without even alluding to his qua fications as a travelling companion, which seem to have been the first order, being always cheerful, resigned, accommodatin considerate, and apt to form attachments to others, he says th in his gravest occupations he was loved. He remarks that even scolds in a pleasant way. "His complaints and angry fit he says, "are agreeable. While blaming vice he pleases sinne He makes the most common minds capable of understanding t most elevated things by the facility of his discourse. By mea of a commentary of two syllables, by a little word to temper t rigour of things, by a particle of charity which sweetens t menaces of justice, he clears the most hard and savage expr sions. He consoles and reassures," adds this old Christian a thor, conscious of the strength of his own faith, "the mi which the text of St. Paul had terrified. Wherever he passes leaves behind him a trace of beauty and a ray of light wh changes the locality; so that what were before precipices a dungeons become flower-gardens and crystal cabinets."

In fine, whether we are so unlucky as to possess in oursel a disposition contrary to moderation, or to have compani forced upon us for a day who like that kind of gloomy ind gence, there is nothing clearer than that under such an in ence, or subject to such interruptions, do what you will in ot respects for us, there can be no enjoyment of a serene h The agitations of an unquiet mind prone to excess in art a philosophy, in social intercourse as in solitary study, carried its inordinate thoughts one time to this side, another time

that, assume many forms, and even become at last an eddy in which all judgment perishes; "for madness," as Coleridge says, "may be defined as the circling in a stream which should be progressive and adaptive." So you see again that we can sometimes sit, in a figurative way, at the feet of Father Thames, instead of wanting always rather saucily, in a material sense, to put our poor feet in his lap. If this spirit be indulged in, there is no escaping these commotions of the mind, take refuge in what you will; neither on the river nor in the garden can you be safe from them. When you cry out, laying down your oars, 'Hark! the vocal nightingale trills her plaintive note in the green dells, tenanting the leafy grove," the sort of people that feel them will begin a discourse on plain chant as the only music fit to be listened to, let the Œdipus Coloneus pretend what it may. When you exclaim, "Oh! look at the little Doric porch or Corinthian temple at the end of the shady walk," they will commence a eulogy on Gothic architecture as being the only style that is not barbarous and unchristian. When you point at the statue of a Mercury or an Apollo in the grove, very pretty things in their way, rising over the roses or the lilies, without having ever dreamt in your life that you worshipped false gods, they will exclaim with indignation against paganism in art and thought, and undertake to demonstrate that the pre-Raphaelites were the only Christian painters; when you show them a pretty garden, and some young persons dancing in the cheltered shade, they declaim against the vices of the lower orders, and insist on what no one denies, the beauty of an ecclesiastical procession, as if you could not discern it with as much intelligence as themselves. Such persons, however clever, can enjoy nothing that does not fall in with their favourite preoccupation. How can they taste, or enable others with them—who must be allowed a certain latitude for opinions and feelings on open questions—to taste a serene hour? Then, again, what is far more serious, pushing each virtue to an extravagance that would render every other impossible, they exemplify the kind of war that Richard of St. Victor complains of, saying, "How virtue contradicts virtue! Justice says one thing and mercy another, all there is between these heavenly citizens a hard contention;

what justice orders to be punished, mercy orders to be pardoned and justice will suffer no rigour to be relaxed, and mercy wi refuse to be bent from the least act of lenity; but all must punished, and all forgiven *."

> "Never in a civil way
> Complying with each thing like Gay,"

but always severe, exceptionless, foes to indulgence, to conciliation, and general good will, they cannot endure either solitude or company; they acknowledge not, with the wise and moderate that, as Cicero says, in many things, what he calls "hominum ineptias ac stultitias," are to be even swallowed by us,—"dev randæ nobis sunt." They seem to know not that we are respo sible for our faults, not for those of nature; that we are n bound to be skilful, though there is no one who is not bound be peaceable; so that if we cannot supply the public with wisdo we are still bound at least to contribute inoffensive habits to repose of our common society. This will not content them; t is, most of it, against their maxims; but in truth, to finish w them, they deserve no other reply excepting "Step ashore, s you are not," as Cervantes would say, "of the confraternity serene hours."

But now our ramblers are mindful of the coming night, fr which the very swans seem retiring among the tall reeds. the water-fowl, too, that flies so low.

> "Whither, 'midst falling dew,
> While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
> Far through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
> Thy solitary way?"

It is from the advancing night, that, darkly painted on crimson sky, her figure floats along. There is much, you ceive from these lines of Bryant, to fill them with artistic miration at such an hour even on our Thames; though t have not, of course, like Chateaubriand, to watch the air coming transparent on the mountain crests, their jagged

* De Statu Interioris Hominis, i. 19.

being thrown with more and more purity against the sky, while a deep night gradually ascends from their feet and rises towards their summits. The darkness, however, steals on them somewhat in this way of beauty, and of admiration too, all the same; and so, without calling a regular council to deliberate on it, having perhaps previously had other grand projects to complete the day elsewhere in a joyous and instructive manner, they leave the river hastily, and regain the region where no one, in a general way, ever dreams of water-fowl, or yet, unless very green, of swans or bulrushes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT now the season, as it were, for our excursions is drawing near its end, may be inferred from this dancing of the yellow leaves, whirled about in circles as we walk through the garden; there are in fact, I understand from some one I need not name, but two more trips left for us to make; and it is proposed, saith my same informant, that for this day our thoughts should turn on the need of resignation for the enjoyment of serene hours, a theme so far, you will perceive at once, since the summer dies, not inappropriate to the occasion. That it is late in the year appears indeed from many symptoms; parasols, and light muslins, and cashmere boots, are growing scarce on the river and in the bowery haunts where we congregate; while some of the gang requiring them, who can ill be spared, are even already playing the thief with their friends to steal their persons from us, vanishing just as the swallows are preparing to vanish, without saying a word to any one. The days are near at hand when chambers will be best. Certainly, the fallen leaves are in abundance now, enough to make a bed for two or three men besides Ulysses, in winter time; but still the air is sweet.

"A bright day shines upon us; come, my friend,
Even sad men now do feel their griefs
Slide off, and joy drown sorrow in their tears."

The iron boats that ply between the London bridges, wit
their romantic, their hopeful, and sometimes—as events tur
out—pathetic names, are not to be despised by any class
the population that ever migrates from its nest at all. It mus
be granted, indeed, that our injured and calumniated river
which comes in for the honour of being caricatured with minis
ters of state, is not so pretty here as by those green, quiet ban
along which we glided at sunset some weeks ago. It must b
conceded, also, that to behold a whole fleet of sooty steamer
dark as ebony, crowded with black-clothed men, and not
straw bonnet or a gay parasol amongst them, breasting th
river and occupying its whole width from shore to shore, a
they follow some racing crews on a grand—I was within an ac
of saying field—day, is more calculated to scare than to cal
you; for to hear the unaccountable yells that issue from the
on such occasions, and to note their dismal hue, you migh
think it a sudden invasion from Lapland of malignant beings
rather than parties of well-disposed Christians proposing t
enjoy themselves, as well as to cheer and not swamp thei
friends upon the river. But there is still, at other times, th
graceful, rapid vessel that, like an arrow, skims against th
stream, emitting only the juvenile cry of "Ease her!" "Sto
her!" as the case requires,—with its crowd of smiling people
delighted to find themselves afloat, made fine for the day i
bright colours, and who, let who will grumble, are all mor
or less pleasing in each other's sight. Besides, there may b
on board perhaps, who knows? some little one that takes th
fancy of every stranger, too young as yet to pull an oar amids
a crowd of boats, and who is destined to pass over the Thame
but once, exulting and admiring all things as you see him now
Alas! reader, it may be even so, or rather, it is not an hypo
thesis. I am an historian here. There has sat some elder on
doting on the oar, and there at his side this angel-boy, wh
was to see but eight summers, longing to emulate him in tha
way on those very waters. An accident, the being too late for

train at London bridge, had occasioned, while others were resigning themselves with becoming patience to sit for a whole hour in a waiting-room, this little voyage, as far as Waterloo or Hungerford pier and back again, suggested, in order just to give the boy a glimpse at the river that he had so often heard about, and on which he would have been so proud, so enraptured to row himself a little later, some "to-morrow,"

"——— ecce aliud cras
Egerit hos annos ———;"

for that joyful morrow, as we should think it, that first holiday on the Thames, was never to come for him. "Resignation!" you cry, for you have heard that such is to be the subject of our conversation to-day, without caring much for the summer's being nearly past,—who needs resignation when one goes out for a day's pleasure on the river? Well, two years after that short trip I have been telling you of between the bridges, if you had addressed that remonstrance to the stranger just alluded to, (he would have been alone then; perhaps he might have been invited to join you on an excursion;) you would have found that he had to communicate on the subject something of a general nature that would have been possibly new to you, and not even without its importance to yourself.

"Alas! how oft in later years,
Though changed the heart may prove,
Doth memory's dream recall through tears
A father's early love!"

At all events, and even without reference to any single tragedy, we may suppose that there is some one of our party for to-day who has a right to be heard as an "expert" on such a subject as this; for though, of course, as far as relates to the particular training which he may have had to become one, it is a matter that concerns no one else, it is allowable to imagine our having some companion who has felt what are agonies of heart, arising in a great measure, as he may fancy, from his love of others and from pity for others. I say as he may fancy, but of course fancies are often only dreams; and therefore, whatever he may have thought, it may have been somewhat for himself all the

while that he was feeling. When lives and memories ar cemented together by affection, it is a difficult thing to separat the sufferings that belong to each. No doubt a man pities hin self a little at times. But still it may be believed that on feels such an impression in its full intensity when there is n second person to pity for the very same reasons. His heart dis solves quite away, but only to the blow which has laid anothe prostrate. So after all, perhaps, our poor friend's feelings i this respect may have been founded on some truth,—and thu will he have an undeniable claim to be heard while proposin and discussing this theme; the more passionately, perhaps, a having possibly been constrained to maintain silence with re spect to much that he has suffered through the pangs and disap pointments of a heart, of which no one but himself, he feels, ma know either the warmth or the fickleness, not to say perversity From such lips as his, therefore, at least an affirmation of t need of resignation may be listened to while all who are presen may be invited to consider it in the light of humanity a general.

The subject then for discussion to-day must be, as was sai on setting out, the disposition of being resigned as constitutin a qualification which is often indispensable for the attainmen of our general purpose. The necessity, I grant, for such temper on occasions of this kind, whether at the commencemen or the close of the season, may at first be any thing but appa rent. It may be thought, naturally enough, that the sort o pleasure supposed in all these rambles involves the absence o any experience which could call for the exercise of such temper as that; but hark! and pardon me for breaking o without finishing,—what is this we have just heard?

> "'Twas harmony. It was no light air, I'm sure.
> Indeed it carried something, methought,
> Of sorrow's descant; I heard love in't, too."

Likely enough; for such is the burden of many of our mos familiar songs, which are listened to when people go out fo pleasure, as in the stanzas,

> "My heart is sad for thee, Annie,
> My heart is sad for thee;

I feel as if the sun, Annie,
Had ceased to shine on me.
And when I see thy fav'rite flow'rs,
Or hear thy fav'rite lay,
What lips can breathe my ardent grief?
What pen my woe pourtray?

"Ah! thou art far away, Annie,
Ah! thou art far away,
Where thou'lt ne'er see earth's flow'rs, Annie,
Nor hear an earthly lay.
And ere I leave this gloomy world,
My latest prayer shall be,
That I may reach thy heav'nly home,
And ever dwell with thee."

It is astonishing how music even of itself awakens memories! However, had the groves been silent, a moment's reflection would have dissipated the error, and convinced us, that while some are left without either oars or companions, as Homer says, nearly every one has more or less occasion for being well resigned, from having suffered things at one time or other of his life, however as yet short, the memory of which would otherwise incapacitate him for the kind of enjoyment that we wish to partake of. There are certain obsessions of the memory which oblige us, even when happy and satisfied, to regard the past with sadness. A head which does not turn back at times towards horizons that are vanishing away, contains neither thoughts nor love. "No, no," as an American author humorously says, alluding to a game of which we all of the river at least know the sound, if not the practice, which suits others better,—

"Being rather the disciples of beer,
Than of any thing more refined and dear,"—

"This life ain't all ale and skittles; that's a fact." It is not all feathering of oars and listening to a guitar either, which is a consideration more likely to affect our kind of excursionists.

"Methinks thou look'st lean upon't."

One might often say and expect to hear for answer,

"Alas! how should I do otherwise, that lie
All night with such a raw-bon'd skeleton
As Memory, and run all day on his errands?"

But sooner or later so it must be with most of us. Why, man, that imperturbable Olympian serenity which reigns in Homer cannot be found in later poems, and how much less in life! Yet Homer himself paints Helen weeping, and Telemachus weeping, and Menelaus weeping; and if we refer to later chivalry, there was no one we read to whose memory the knight of Fortune was so greatly affected as to that of Don Guilan the Pensive. On the whole therefore we may be sure that, even on our expeditions, though unfortunately there is no spot near the Thames called the Cape of the Holy Sigh, like that Cap de San-Souspir in Provence, there is always some one string or other of the lyre which, when touched, can bring, if not a tear into all eyes, something that looks like it in one or two; a chord that, if it does not absolutely produce in every one a desire, as Homer calls it, of groans and lamentation, can elicit sufficient proof that there is a heart-wound in some one or other of those present, and that, take from them what you will, like poor King Richard, "still their griefs are theirs."

"You may their glories and their state depose,
But not their griefs; still are they kings of those."

"There is," as a great writer remarks, "a short sigh which comes and goes too quickly for the sense of man's friendship to recognize it as the sound of sorrow, but which a woman, who loves the person from whom it escapes, will hear plain enough, and understand right well its meaning *." It would be difficult, in fact, to point out, in sunniest hours, many persons worth knowing, whether young or old, gay or grave, who do not need a resignation which involves assuredly a previous struggle to be serene. Here's a boating party, for instance, in some respects as much like one of our water expeditions perhaps as any thing can be that occurred so long ago as the year 1577. Well, there sits a young and charming creature, Mlle. de Tournon, obliged to conceal her feelings, while the Marquis de Varaubon, her

* P. Caxton.

former lover, does not even seem to be aware that she is in the same boat. "Sorrow and mortification seized upon her heart to such a degree," says Marguerite de Valois, whom she was accompanying, "being constrained as she was to look cheerful, and bear it as if nothing had happened, that all of a sudden, on stepping out of the boat, she found that she could not breathe except in crying with mortal pangs. There being no other cause of illness, her youth fought it out for eight or ten days, but death at the end of that time proved the strongest, ravishing her from her mother, who, though a terrible woman, causing her hardly ever to have a dry eye, which was one reason indeed why she so desired her liberty, yet loved her passionately*." Now, let us take another and more familiar example. Are we to suppose ourselves more Arcadian, and raised higher above the sphere of realities, than the parties that used to meet under the shade of the beech-tree to sing and repeat verses in alternate stanzas in pastoral poetry?

> "Hic ver purpureum; varios hic flumina circum
> Fundit humus flores; hic candida populus antro
> Inminet, et lentæ texunt umbracula vites.
> Huc ades; insani feriant sine littora fluctus."

This is a charming scene, and those present feel it to be so, exclaiming, "O fortunate old man! here amidst the familiar streams and sacred fountains you will enjoy, not only the cool shade, but the sunshine; the murmur of the bees will invite you to a sweet sleep, nor will the doves cease to sigh from the lofty elm." No need of resignation, here, you think? Yet what is heard next? "Time takes away all things, even the mind. Once I knew this and that; now all is forgotten, and my very voice fails me." This piece would accord well, you perceive, with Gleyre's boat "illusions passing," to which I would rather append for title the words "transitoria amantibus, sine fide advesperascit." On the 31st of August Charles V. was enjoying a serene hour, passing the afternoon in the western alcove of St. Just, sitting in the open air, and basking in the sun, which, as it descended to the horizon, beat straight upon

* Mémoires de M. de Valois.

the white walls. It was a pleasant spot, just what we should like, and try to create for ourselves by a little imagination gilding reality, filled with the fragrance of the garden and the murmur of the fountain, and bright with the glimpses of the golden Vera. But the funeral service had only just taken place. So you see what was in the cup that day. On the 1st of September, though ill, the sunshine again tempted him to enjoy such an hour in the same open gallery. But while he sits so pensive, what picture is that which he sends for? It is a portrait of the late empress, and so now over that gentle face he hangs for some time lost in thought. Then he is seen contemplating some devout pictures, remaining abstracted and motionless. Such was his last serene hour, made up of silent resignation, the fever having that moment seized him, in which state he had to be carried to the bed from which he never rose again.

This is an imperial and confessedly a tragic picture. Well, there are others for you to look at more homely, which teach the same lesson. The better people are, the more they have to suffer, says the Greek poet,

> τοὺς εὐγενεῖς γὰρ οὐ στυγοῦσι δαίμονες,
> τῶν δ' ἀναριθμήτων μᾶλλόν εἰσιν οἱ πόνοι*.

Who more familiar to the groves and meadows that invite us to land at every turn of the river, than the poor, impulsive, and romantic common people, as the indifferent children of the earth, having escaped from their garrets and workshops on a holiday, perhaps like the poor girl being expected by her employers to absent herself on the Sunday, let her go where she will? I suppose then that we all know, or can comprehend, what need they have to be resigned before mounting the waggon or embarking in the skiff.

> "O let those cities that of plenty's cup
> And her prosperities so largely taste,
> With their superfluous riots, hear these tears!"

But take men in full health and vigour, abounding in all things,

* Helen, 1679.

and not excluding what you call mental, meaning literary, resources; how often in a serene hour do you find even them anxious to look at the spot where some loved one lately played or conversed, while they, by some sudden removal hence, feel that they have experienced all the power and variety of fortune! Listening again to the songs that rise over the water, hear we not often?—

"I miss thy kind and gentle voice—
I miss thy cheerful smile,
That could with happy hearts rejoice,
Or lonely hours beguile.
Amid our favourite haunts alone
And sad at heart I stray,
The scene is chang'd since thou art gone—
Its charm has pass'd away:
And ev'ry bird and ev'ry flower
That in my path I see,
But brings to mind some happy hour
That here I pass'd with thee.

"And when the summer's days are o'er,
And winter's winds blow chill,
I sit beside the hearth once more,
And there I miss thee still.
That sunny smile is far away—
I seek it now in vain;
That voice, sweet as the song-bird's lay,
I ne'er shall hear again.
E'en as the dove at evening strays
Home to its resting tree,
So mem'ry turns to those bright days
That here I pass'd with thee."

But look to grave men, learned and philosophic, who sing not, and how many such sages have you in the position of Cicero when he began the third book De Oratore, and had to speak of the death of Crassus, who had been taken away suddenly by death, scarcely ten days after they had met the last time, to discuss the subject contained in the preceding book!—or when in the Brutus he had to allude to those common miseries of the

age, to lose the memory of which he had engaged in that discussion! Cicero speaks of his calamitous leisure when he wrote much, "in illo calamitoso otio;" and Pliny says that books only teach himself a greater sensibility to misfortunes, though, as a literary man, of course he must add, they teach him also how to bear them with more patience. Turning to a more modern world, we find ourselves introduced to such manners in nearly every one of the old romances of chivalry; as, for instance, in the Palmerin of England, where Primaleon meets the lady who tells him that in "the garden of damsels" she receives as much solace, by mourning, as any lady can obtain in mirth. But open this little volume of the Greek Anthology which our light friend has brought with him, and see how many things it contains bearing immediately on our subject, which might have passed but yesterday in the midst of us here in London. For instance, the pillar says this, "Snatched away is Theodoté, young in years and small in size. And the little one says to his father this in return, Restrain thy sorrow, Theodotus; mortals are frequently unfortunate." Some one else here, perhaps, has heard lately, "It can't be helped, papa, it can't be helped!" But again hear the Greeks: "Sit here under the black poplars, travellers, since you are tired, and drink, going near to our rill; but remember the fountain, even when you are far away, which Simus built up near his deceased child Gillus." Again, we find these lines: "Thou art gone, my charming wife, after carrying off the highest honours for the beauty of form and the moral conduct of soul; and truly was thy name Proté (first), for every thing was second to thy inimitable grace." But, closing the delicious though pensive book, take a scene from modern life; enter in imagination the little inn or tavern with him who sings the ballad of "Bouillabaisse." It's some years since he sat a youth in that old familiar corner. There are still some of the same faces; the table is in the accustomed nook, and he sees again the well-known chair; but hear how he continues:

"Ah, me! how quick the days are flitting,
I mind me of a time that's gone,
When here I'd sit, as now I'm sitting,
In this same place, but not alone.

"A fair young form was nestled near me,
A dear, dear face look'd fondly up,
And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me;
There's no one now to share my cup.
* * * * *
"I drink it as the Fates ordain it.
Come, fill it, and have done with rhymes;
Fill up the lovely glass, and drain it,
In memory of dear old times *."

After hearing this revelation of a heart, no one, I think, will be full of words, "poor breathing orators of miseries." Here they can have no scope. Silence, that will sit drooping, with regard to such memories will suit us best, while our sweetest shade is but a grove of cypress! It skills not to talk. We should only

"Make woe wanton with too fond delay;
Once more, 'tis gone; the rest let sorrow say."

Clearly, there may be some in such parties as ours who resemble Floraman lamenting his Altea's death, in the old chivalrous romance,—"If in the field or in the house he was for a moment unemployed, it was passed in thoughts of her whom he had lost; he would talk to her as though she were present; he would compose virelays to her, and write love-letters as though she were one to whom he could send them. At the great marriage-feast in the garden of Florida, the Emperor suddenly missed him, and seeing that he was not at any of the tables, he inquired for him. One of the servants replied that he was at the end of the garden, lying under a tree. Florendos his friend went for him, for all well understood why he had retired from this scene of joy. In vain all attempts to cheer him. 'Leave me,' he said, 'with my own reflections; my sorrow satisfies me.'" Such men may be amongst our number, claiming for themselves the privilege that was bestowed on Æthalides, one of the Argonauts, that half of his time might be spent among the living, and the other half among the dead, which will account for a certain fit of absence that may be remarked in them. But there are other changes likely enough to come upon men of which they may find courage to speak. Now with respect to these, the truth is,

* Thackeray.

that when seeking to be pleased with a party on the river, or on Hampstead Heath, or wherever else you choose, the first petition of many might resemble that of Angelina in the "Sisters," saying, for this moment at least,

> "Let nothing of my story be remembered
> With such a tragedy."

Alas! where is the fête here often below at which some beloved one is not absent? Therefore hear we—

> "O that I could forget what I have been!
> Or not remember what I must be now!"

Serene hours, moreover, constituting in some sort a kind of mental retreat from the world, by their very sweetness only revive the memory of those whom we have lost in it. It is then that we most think of them, saying, "How little John would have liked this!" "How Tom would have helped us here!" How at such an incident a little female voice, still left, would have been sure to exclaim, in allusion to an elder sister snatched from us, one of pure simplicity and of innocence, growing in a deep sweet hidden holiness, "Oh, Mary Anne, what a funny girl you are!" for that model of exquisite grace, to whom such apostrophes used to be addressed, was nervous like a child, and, moreover, endowed with certain keen perceptions, that are in general denied to others. It is then, too, that we may be led to reflect and say to each other, "How grandmamma would have loved to hear of this! how Jane Mary would have tasted this calm moment! aye, and how poor playful Alice even would have turned the whole of her thoughts to the future, and silently to heaven!" As M. de Sacy says, "In the world, life surrounds us, and so presses us on all sides, that vacant places are soon filled, and one cannot expect to find long remembrances; here, as in villages, people after many years remember last words and last actions of the departed." Without resignation we are therefore, in these very hours that we had destined to serenity, filled most of all with poignant bitterness. But in fact every where, without that temper,

> "——— Miserable we
> Do every day play our own tragedy."

You may often read as much in the looks even of our young people, who are not like the painting of a sorrow, a face without a heart, and yet whose tears "come slow from sorrow—quick from affection." Each might say with Eugenia,

> "If my brow so sad appear,
> My fortune's livery I wear."

If they have no Bolingbroke to offer scornfully, as to poor King Richard, a looking-glass, the clear river has its mirror to elicit reflections such as his—

> "No deeper wrinkles yet? Hath sorrow struck
> So many blows upon this face of mine,
> And made no deeper wounds?"

The cause which renders resignation indispensable may exist even without a remembrance at the moment of the sadness; or, as a great author, speaking of one that had been heart-struck, says, "here will be no unvarying gloom. However great his causes of sorrow, he does not for ever parade its ostentatious mourning, nor follow the hearse of his hopes with the long face of an undertaker. He will have his gleams of cheerfulness,—the old smile will sometime light the eye and awake the old playfulness of the lip. Like the bird that has lost its young ones, if we accept this simile of Chateaubriand, it is still the tone of his happy days that he sings—as if knowing only one song. But what a great and critical sorrow does leave behind it is often far worse than the sorrow itself has been. It is a change in the inner man, which strands him on the shoal of the present; which warns him from dwelling on the past, and, forcing the lesson of the vanity of human wishes, strikes from his reckoning, as far as this life is concerned, hopes in the future. Thus, out of our threefold existence two parts are annihilated—the what has been—the what shall be. We fold our arms, and upon the crag-stone which looms out of the measureless sea, and say to ourselves, looking neither backward nor beyond, 'let us bear what is,' and so for the moment the eye can lighten and the lip can smile *." Yes, believe it, dear companions, even

* P. Caxton.

in the boat from which songs and laughter rise to the delighte ear, even in the garden amidst the music and the dance, the may be some retiring one—invited, willing, or perhaps force to be of that party by loving friends,—

> "Whose face is but the title to a volume
> Of so much misery within, as would
> Tire your amazed soul to read."

And besides, remember, as we have just suggested, that eve more than all this is true. Say, if you will, our feet are tune; strike up behind the tree. Remember, then, that th very fact of persons being not alone in a kind of retreat fro the world, but enamoured in a moment of forgetfulness wi enjoyment of the kind we are supposing, renders it only t more probable that it is they who stand in greatest need resignation: for it is a well-known fact, that persons form with such aptitudes feel most acutely; as conversely those delicate sensibility who suffer most, were made to enjoy mo "I never," says a modern author, "saw a man with that ve of melancholy in him that did not like fun, provided his se ness was not the effect of disease." It is an old observati too, as the poet's lines attest—

> "Quem res plus nimio delectavere secundæ,
> Mutatæ quatient ——————."

Whom pleasures move most sorrow grieves most. Good he vens! some present with us perhaps have once or twice claimed ere now,

> "What unexpected, most prodigious cloud,
> With his black wings, hath in a minute veil'd
> The brightest day that ever smiled upon me!"

Aye, that was the time of weeping—

> "I had a dove, and the sweet dove died.
> Sweet little red-feet, why should you die?
> Why would you leave me, sweet bird, why *?"

All this is a common thing in the world. As when, after a f

* Keats.

brief years, children pass into boys and men, with the face of the morning gladdening the earth with its light, and ripening thought into action, and suddenly they are removed, never here to blow into life's flower again! and perhaps, too, men see verified the quaint lines that issue from the cottage in the Odenwald,—

"I have mark'd it well,—it must be true,—
Death never takes one alone, but two!
Whenever he enters in at a door,
Under roof of gold or roof of thatch,
He always leaves it upon the latch,
And comes again ere the year is o'er.
Never one of a household only!
Perhaps it is a mercy of God,
Lest the dead there under the sod,
In the land of strangers, should be lonely *!"

Where is your friend whose presence once transformed every thing, your playmate, your sweetest rest? Where, at what season, do you miss that companion most? It would be hard to say. The whole, then, is a thing of every-day occurrence,

"Nos quoque floruimus, sed flos erat ille caducus,
Flammaque de stipula nostra brevisque fuit."

Some will tell you that such things are not worth a sigh. True, human life, as Petrarch said, writing to the old Colonna after his calamities, which he had so strangely survived, "is like the sea. Human life, in regard to things of incontestable worth, is exposed to frequent squalls; and the end of the finest day is often dark and stormy. Whoever is wise ought therefore to apply to our existence here below the words of Palinurus, speaking of what in one sense so well represents it, and exclaim—

'Mene huic confidere monstro †?'

Which is to ask in other words, Am I to set no value on resignation, because at the moment every thing smiles?" Do you nevertheless ask again, after all that has been suggested, Why speak of resignation on a holiday, when we walk forth to enjoy

* Longfellow. † Æn. v. 849.

serene hours? Do you cry out as some one in Homer, "I am not delighted with lamentations at supper time?" Well, the Spaniards, in their homely way, shall answer you. It is because water that has passed on will not turn the mill. It is as the Greek poet says, that to all mankind their children, and their bosom friends too, are their life! Oh, ye lost ones!

> "Music, when soft voices die,
> Vibrates in the memory;
> Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
> Live within the sense they quicken:
> Rose-leaves, when the rose is dead,
> Are heap'd for the beloved's bed;
> And so thy thoughts when thou art gone
> Love itself shall slumber on."

Alas! if all this be not sufficiently explicit, seek the answer through the circles of your friends and acquaintances—where

> "Mista senum ac juvenum densantur funera."

Yes, yes, even so; we are such stuff as dreams are made of. We who survive are all treated, more or less, as if by the witches in Macbeth—

> "Show his eyes and grieve his heart,
> Come like shadows, so depart."

To those, then, if you please, who have departed from life let us briefly advert, and beseech indulgence; for

> "Hæret lateri lethalis arundo."

No resignation? no serene hour. For some are remembered who needed not to boast their worth, like those whom nature and art had left unfurnished; some so bold that they would press to heaven in their young days; some are remembered, of whom we need only say here, that no one on hearing of their death was either glad or disposed quickly to forget them. It is Tacitus who uses this expression, speaking of the death of Agricola,—"nec quisquam, audita morte Agricolæ, aut lætatus est, aut statim oblitus est." Literally, some can say with Dichu, in a play of Shirley,—

"———— I have wept for ye, boys.
And constantly before the sun awaked,
When the cold dew-drops fell upon the ground,
As if the morn were discontented too,
My restless feet o'er many a rugged stone
Have walk'd to drop my tears into the stream
For your sad memories."

Yes, just so; for men never seem to imagine that they are so near to attend those they loved in their last and long excursion, while building their funeral tenement without a thought about themselves. Is there no resignation? There can be no serene hour; for we have all still traces of our Germanic origin, in this respect, that we do not think it even honourable to forget those departed whom we have loved, though only boys of eight or youths and girls of twenty summers. "Lamenta ac lacrimas cito, dolorem et tristitiam tarde ponunt. Feminis lugere honestum est; viris meminisse." In old chivalrous romance, which was often a faithful picture of our common nature, we read that Don Duardos and Primaleon always felt such great sorrow for the death of their friends, that never after were they joyful so long as they lived. No resignation? Then no serene hours; for though years may have passed since we laid their poor bones in earth, there are days clothed in mourning silence and regrets that must recall them, and hear strange echoes "through all the haunted chambers of the heart," which will prove in that event like those described in the Æneid, days always of the same unmitigated bitterness which will cast their gloom before and after upon all others,—

"Jamque dies, ni fallor, adest, quem semper acerbum,
Semper honoratum (sic dî voluistis) habebo *."

But we are not at the end yet of our reiterated question, No resignation? Then there will be companions raised by memory's force to defeat all provision for the enjoyment of a serene hour. For, do what we will, the departed, though it be only the "puer" Ascanius, or the playful girl, must accompany us on or off the Thames; it matters not, there is no denying them. Like the

* v. 49.

vision of the child in Macbeth, they can't be commanded. You thought, perhaps, at one time, that in the soul are no affections —that, as the poet says,

> "We pour out our affections with our blood,
> And, with our blood's affections, fade our lives."

Death's eloquence has now taught you better; and you believe that those whom you have lost take somehow an interest in you still. You thought them left upon the wind-swept cliff that beetles over the main, alone within the dark sepulchral chamber, or under the soft green sod; but no, they dwell within the luminous air—they enter the boat with us, they mount the garden steps with us, they sit by our side, or play near us as we gaze upon the gliding river. They haunt our houses, too,

> "We meet them at the doorway, on the stair,
> Along the passages they come and go,
> Impalpable impressions on the air,
> A sense of something moving to and fro.
> There are more guests at table than the hosts
> Invited; the illuminated hall
> Is throng'd with quiet, inoffensive ghosts,
> As silent as the pictures on the wall."

Yes, it is so with us; and, as the chorus in Euripides says "What greater suffering than this canst thou find for mortals than to behold their children and their loved ones dead?" Again, in the Anthology, "Who is he, that, after weeping for a son, has not endured the extreme of ill?" Who is he, that after losing a congenial friend, has within him a whole heart? Yes, we owe more tears than you shall see us pay. I know, indeed, that all the moderns do not seem to feel, in this respect, like the ancients. There are amongst them who hold language on these occasions, that might remind one of the answer of Morgan, the great calculator of lives, to some afflicted person who said that he had lost so many friends (naming the number) in a certain space of time; when the wise one, taking down a book from his office shelf, and looking into it, said, "So you ought, sir, and three more*." Without being exactly Stoics to

* Moore's Diary, vol. v.

enable us to account for it, there are many who say with Seneca, "nothing is sooner hated than grief, which, when quite fresh, finds a consoler, but when inveterate is derided, and justly so; for in that case it is either feigned or foolish *." That is a hard way of treating us. But though there may be no great pretensions to philosophy, there does not appear to be any danger of exaggeration in the way of sympathy in the higher ranks of English society at present, where some are heard to speak like the traitor Count Amauri in Huon de Bordeaux: "My cousin Oger, the Dane, slew my son Bertrand, and I made no great mourning for him, because by no mourning could I have recovered him." At least, some guides of public opinion would hardly recognize the justice of the feelings that belonged to the old humanity, or to that which still exists where the sophist's voice is unheard. They think, perhaps, to have finished with us, by expressing some harsh maxim or other which bears little resemblance to the deep thought of Johnson, when he said, "It is not growing like a tree in bulk, or standing like it for an hundred years, that makes man better,"—so concluding,

> "In small proportions we just beauties see,
> And in short measures life may perfect be."

A few commonplace reflections, with accommodations to suit the particular case, and pity dies. All seems then forgotten, even the love, the faithfulness, the devoted attachment of another's heart. What man can fathom this mystery? Perhaps it can be solved though without much philosophy. I think it is that people now are always in a hurry. But people who go out for the day, you know, have leisure. They are not in a hurry, as men elsewhere are seen. They can ride or saunter along through woods and valleys thinking of the departed, like that knight of death that we read of in the Palmerin of England, attired in black armour, whereon was painted the resemblance of a woman's face seen through shrubs, which was that of his Altea, for whom he felt as much love as if she were still living,—instance, by the way, to prove how much immortal truth and beauty were often contained amidst all their follies in the old romances of chivalry.

* Epist. 63.

But hear a recent poet describe, as one of our saunterers could feel, the impressions produced by a very trifling object.

"I found it here,—a worn-out shoe,
All mildew'd with time and wet with dew.
'Tis a little thing: ye would pass it by
With never a thought, or word, or sigh;
Yet it stirs in my spirit a hidden well,
And the eloquent tones of the past doth tell.

"It tells of a little fairy-child
That bound my heart with a magic wild;
Of bright blue eyes and golden hair,
That ever shed joy and sunlight there.
Of a prattling voice so sweet and clear,
And the tiny feet that were ever near.

"It tells of hopes that with him had birth,
Deep buried now in the silent earth;
Of a heart that had met an answering tone,
And that is left alone—alone!

"O ye who have never o'er loved ones wept,—
Whose brightest hopes have ne'er been swept
Like the pure white cloud from the summer sky,
Like the wreath of mist from the mountain high,
Then melting away in its native sphere;

"Like rose-leaves loosed by the zephyr's sigh,—
Like the wave that kisses some graceful spot,
Then passes away, yet is ne'er forgot;
If, like these, your life-hopes have never fled,
Ye cannot know of the tears I shed;

"Ye cannot know what a little thing
From memory's silent fount can bring
The voice and form that were once so dear.
Yet there are hearts, were they only here,
That could feel with me, when all wet with dew,
I found this warning in the little shoe."

A susceptibility to impressions of this kind seems to be in

accordance with the genius, as it were, of our ramblers in general. However, be that as it may,

> "There are things of which I may not speak;
> There are dreams that cannot die;
> There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
> And bring a pallor into the cheek,
> And a mist before the eye."

Yes; and perhaps, too, that apparent insensibility which has been noted in the moderns can be sometimes traced to this very fact, and may be so explained. What is lacked in outward demonstration, is often supplied, as our old poet says, with honourable sorrow, soldier's sadness, a kind of silent mourning, such as men who know no tears use to show in great losses. "Let us be silent about these," said Brutus when mention was made of Torquatus and Triarius, whom he had greatly loved. "Let us be silent lest we increase our grief; for the remembrance of the past is bitter. Let us cease lamenting, and let each proceed to deliver what he has to say; for that is what was proposed." Clearly there are men besides Agamemnon, aye, and young men too, whose heads should be covered with folds by painters to signify that they are incapable of representing such sorrow; and, moreover, as we have just heard suggested, what would be most difficult perhaps of all to represent, there is the final result years after the violence of affliction has passed away, and men are going forth on their holiday to be pleased. Yes, even so; for, as a great author remarks with perfect truth, "we knew not while wrestling with our woe the extent of its ravages. As a land the day after a flood, as a field the day after a battle, is the sight of our own sorrow when we no longer have to stem its raging, but to endure the destruction it has made *." I would even go farther than this eloquent author; I would say that fresh grief, however intense, caused by the recent loss of one beloved, is, under such circumstances, a thing to be looked back upon with pleasure,—in others to be envied. Those who have passed by that gorge learn to know long afterwards that what followed was even worse. At first your child, your playmate,

* P. Caxton.

and your beloved one, leave behind them, still with you, as we have just observed, almost half of themselves; they leave their memory clear and distinct in every room of the house, in every book on the table, in every picture on the walls, or, if undomesticated there, in every song that you listen to, in every walk that you take through the fields, or groves, or gardens. Without resignation, I admit that this itself is something tearful, but still it has its pleasure; the place of deposit for the body itself having a certain attraction, as when the Count de Torregiani built a tower at his town palace overlooking all the city, from the top of which he could see the cemetery without the walls, and contemplate the spot where his beloved one had left her earthly form*. There is, moreover, the excitement and the wonder caused by death's eloquence; there is the burst of tears before strangers, to move their own when perhaps in a public office they take down a message for the telegram; there are the new hopes and resolutions that the loss itself seems to inspire; all which things can minister a high and mystic serenity to the heart. But after a few years have elapsed comes the time, alack!—the cruel time—when the small sweet flower, or the full-expanded beauty that is bound up with all this grows pale, and indistinct, and dim, and half fanciful,—when, instead of an effort being necessary not to see and hear the departed every where and every moment, you have actually to make an effort to recall the image or the voice when you set yourself most expressly to think about them,—when you are restored to the sad liberty which consists in not being held in check by the spell of innocent looks and artless prattle, or of a genial spirit animated by a woman's courage,—

> "Le temps, ce ravisseur de toute joie humaine,
> Nous prend jusqu'à nos pleurs, tant Dieu veut nous sevrer!
> Et nous perdons encore la douceur de pleurer
> Tous ces chers trépassés que l'esprit nous ramène †."

When the hour of this weaning comes for us,—when the influence of those memories begins to yield, and the heart grows hardened against their failing potency,—it is then that your

* Lamartine, Fior d'Aliza. † Louis Veuillot.

beloved ones are gone! it is then that you feel left quite alone; and that, let me tell you, is the grief of griefs, a sort of epoch of chaos, a sort of desolation within you for which there are no words, with no one, not even yourself, audibly to deplore it; or, we might say, that is the entire breaking up of the wreck, and the dispersion one by one of even the floating planks, and the final triumph of the sea and the tempest, when, as far as your perceptions are concerned, the last vestige of what you doted on is dissipated and lost, and nothing is left to gaze upon but the trackless ocean that represents the unknown and the eternal!

Moreover, if you will hear speak persons experienced this way, grief all through has many tones, many tastes, many odours, as it were. Bless you! there is as much variety in grief, in mental afflictions and pangs of the heart, as in flower-beds. When you have smelt the rose, you do not imagine that you have nothing new to expect from the parterre. Well, it is just so with the garden of your heart; and as there are odours of flowers that affect you differently,—some that make you feel above the earth, others faint, others even sick,—so are there various momentary passages of grief shooting through you,—at one time, like the fragrance of the lily, that seems to leave you without breath; at another resembling that of the violet, which you feel as if you could die inhaling. The grief for your little boy's death, however intense, is not the same as grief for an elder son,—grief for such a son is not the same as grief for a dear friend, however entwined within your heart,—grief for a mother is not the same as grief for a wife,—there's something quite new in that; grief for a wife is not the same as grief for a daughter, in whom your own life seemed blended inextricably; and that grief even which appeared to reduce you to a state of utter exhaustion, or, if you will, of being quite full, and to overflowing, leaves space, nevertheless, within you for that different grief with which you feel yourself at last left in the world, in your own house, perhaps, with all your books, and pictures, and trinkets, and memorials of the bygone, quite by yourself, alone. Well, trust the word of one experienced for it, there are tough seniors who can and will handle an oar yet, that can make out thus, or verify a catalogue of this kind from what

has passed, and perhaps within the space of a very few years, in the secrets of their own bosom. They have taken their degrees in grief after this manner, and, as far as regards suffering at least, may be said to have gone out in honours.

Resignation, then, deep, religious, Christian resignation, is indispensable when it is a question only of setting off for the day to enjoy a serene hour. Without it, we must expect to hear such complaints as Cowper uttered in the shrubbery:—

"Oh, happy shades! to me unblest,
Friendly to peace, but not to me;
How ill the scene that offers rest
And heart that cannot rest, agree!
This glassy stream, that spreading pine,
Those alders quiv'ring to the breeze,
Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,
And please, if any thing could please.
But fix'd unalterable care
Foregoes not what she feels within,
Shows the same sadness every where,
And slights the season and the scene."

Yet, as already remarked, it must be admitted that it is not all men who seem practically to acknowledge the need of this kind of resignation, and its importance as to efficacious results of a positive kind, or else there would be more persons observed attaining to such an interval in times when they are even most anxious to realize it. Some few, with plenty of leisure, but coarse and obdurate, wanting the natural touch, seem to feel not like others. Some even whom we wish to venerate seem to have lost the power of sympathy through the habit of witnessing sorrows; for as surgeons are said to grow callous to the physical sufferings of men, so those who have a general mission to minister to minds in pain appear often to feel not overmuch in any particular instance. It is wonderful to observe how they turn from it to what their own personal enjoyment the next moment requires. And yet, what is the torture of the body to the deep bitter anguish of the heart? One feels more inclined to excuse even your more practical characters, who take every thing that happens to others as a matter of course, which only demands a little courage, in which they feel themselves to be

proficients. These last, at all events, verify the words of Cicero, that grief is short, "cito enim arescit lacrima, præsertim in alienis malis." Such are the friends who left the father of the Duc de Saint-Simon, who was warmly attached to the memory of his royal master, Louis XIII., "indignant to find himself alone at Saint-Denis*" on the anniversary of that monarch. But others have been known, instead of invoking resignation, actually to grow impious by calamities and losses, crying out in their despair,

> "——— All's but nought;
> Patience is sottish; and impatience does
> Become a dog that's mad ———."

Perhaps, indeed, it is only religious mothers who are not tempted to take this direction for at least some seconds. The fact then is, as Richard of St. Victor remarks, that "sadness, when it is chastised by divine Providence, endeavours to accuse not its own conscience, but the justice of God, so that what God prepares for its correction, and, as it were, for a medicine adapted to its especial disease, it dares to malign. What," he asks, "so impious? what so alien from true piety†?" Faust is led to this result, exclaiming,

> "Cursed be hope, and faith's devotion,
> And cursed be patience more than all."

We may demand, referring to our especial object, what so destructive of a serene hour? For, in truth, as Theseus says to Œdipus, "anger in misfortune is not good." Our Cowley at least knew the better way when, in allusion to that tragic word of the Roman patriot who said that his fate was a proof of virtue being but a name, he cried,

> "Hold, noble Brutus! and restrain
> The bold voice of thy generous disdain:
> These mighty gulfs are yet
> Too deep for all thy judgment and thy wit.

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* Tom. i. † In Ps. xxv.

The time's set forth already which shall quell
Stiff Reason, when it offers to rebel;
Which these great secrets shall unseal,
And new philosophies reveal.
A few years more, so soon hadst thou not died,
Would have confounded human virtue's pride,
And show'd thee a God crucified."

A time, we are told, will come when such impatience is described as one of the chief calamities that will constitute the abomination of desolation at the end of the world. It is a remarkable passage in Richard of St. Victor where he speaks of the absence of resignation that will be noted then. He cites the prophetic words, "Et antequam conteratur hydria super fontem, et confringatur rota super cisternam," and then proceeds as follows:—"What signs of impatience, and of malice rather than of penitence! To break the vessel on the fountain and the wheel over the well, indicates such impatience that they cannot bear one another; so that when they meet to draw water, one will break the vessel of the other rather than wait for the first comer to be first served,—what malice, when they envy each other a draught of cold water! Now," he adds, "we know that it is humble low persons who meet to draw water. What then," he asks, as if agreeing with all we said on a former occasion about the common people and the worldly,—"what then will your rich and great people do when little people break forth into such impatience and malice? But they will not alone break the vessels which belong to private persons; they will demolish also the wheel which is for the common use and benefit of all. Charity will have grown so cold that they prefer suffering a private loss to not impeding the general service. Remember thy Creator, therefore, before the vessel is broken at the fountain and the wheel over the cistern,—before human impatience and malice break forth into such madness thus*."

Resignation, let us proceed more specially to observe, is not a mere natural virtue, a mere placid acquiescence; it is fortified by certain supernatural views and reasons; all which some per-

* De Mundi Fine.

sons, I am aware, reject on philosophic grounds, such as they are, declaring, with a celebrated Frenchwoman, that "resignation is not in their own personal nature. We confess they actually say that the very word 'resignation' irritates us, as the type of the sentiment used to fill La Mennais with indignation." However, with such people we have nothing to do. Resignation is our philosophy. Sufferings, it knows, may enter as an ingredient even into the cup of sweetest serenity; insomuch that, as the Chancellor d'Aguesseau says, "if we formed a sound judgment of things, even philosophically speaking, the happiest year for us would be that in which we had most trials*." Griefs of course come to every one of us, but all depends, it will say, on the way that we take them. There is a climbing sorrow of which the element is below. There was the suffering of punishment when Judas was reprobate; there was the suffering of correction when Saul was blinded. Both were judgments; "and rightly," adds Richard, "is it said, 'Judicia tua adjuvabunt me†.'" Why put on despondency, "the final heart-armour of the wretched," and repine at what is ordained for our advantage? "Happy the man," exclaims a great observer, "to whom God has given a soul worthy of love and of misfortune! He who has not seen the things of this world and mankind by this twofold light has seen nothing true, and knows nothing." Some one of the ancients used to say, "I know no one so unhappy (perhaps he might have added, no one so disagreeable, no one so incapacitated for the enjoyment of a serene hour) as the man to whom nothing sad has ever happened." "It is certain," as a mystic author remarks, "that nothing enlightens the mind so much as the tears of the heart." Evil is so made to wait upon good in this world, that although there is quite enough superabundance of it to incite us to its diminution (nature herself impelling us to do so), yet, as a great author says, "tears have their delight as well as laughter; and laughter itself is admonished by tears and pain not to be too excessive. Laughter has occasioned death; tears have saved more than life."

* Lett. Philosoph. 35.

† In Ps. cxviii.

"Talk not of wasted affection, affection never was wasted;
If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters returning
Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill them full of refreshment.
That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the fountain.
Patience; accomplish thy labour; accomplish thy work of affection.
Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient endurance is godlike.
Therefore accomplish thy labour of love, till the heart is made godlike,
Purified, strengthen'd, perfected, and render'd more worthy of heaven!"

So spoke the good priest to Evangeline in the absence of her lover. Moreover, as the old poet says,

"Quæ latet inque bonis cessat non cognita rebus,
Apparet virtus arguiturque malis."

You think to avoid the need of resignation by inducing your friend to take to a course of noisy diversion, as if by your crying out, "Away with melancholy!" he could get rid of it. But hear the Greek poet. "The little lament of a swan," saith he, "is more agreeable than the cawing of jackdaws uttered in the spring clouds." You offer, like the comforter of poor King Richard's queen, to tell them tales of sorrow or of joy; and that friend replies, like her,

"——— Of neither;
For if of joy, being altogether wanting,
It doth remember him the more of sorrow;
Or if of grief, being altogether had,
It adds more sorrow to their want of joy;
For what he has, he needs not to repeat;
And what he wants, it boots not to complain."

Nevertheless, suffering, even by itself, has a tendency to produce serene moments,—partly from its possessing a certain power of reviving and refreshing a palled appetite, which is so likely to be the result of its long-protracted absence. Pliny had discovered this secret, and, writing to a friend, he says to him,

"If I were to invite you to a feast, as I would blend dishes of a poignant taste with those of the luscious kind, in order to sharpen the edge of your palate, so I now advise you to enliven sometimes these pleasures with others of a graver sort." In like manner our charming poet, in his book entitled "A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla," says of his readers, "We do not wish to cloy them with sweets; we hope that they will occasionally look very grave over their honey. We should not be disconcerted if some bright eyes even shed tears over it." What man or woman with great gifts was ever quite happy? What vessel, asks Lacordaire, containing a choice, elect soul, has not received from heaven the drop of absinth which is to purify it?

But, above all, suffering, amidst Wordsworth's

"Calm pleasures and majestic pains,"

can conduce to a serene hour by its inspiring and in some sort justifying hopes of happiness to come. The "si ut sapientibus placet" is then most likely to meet with a responsive echo, and something better too.

"Man ought his future happiness to fear,
If he be always happy here;
If no one part of him supplies
The duty of a sacrifice.
Besides, ev'n in this world below,
To those who never did ill fortune know,
The good does nauseous or insipid grow.
Consider man's whole life, and you'll confess
The sharp ingredient of some bad success
Is that which gives the taste to all his happiness."

"Do what you will," says Lacordaire, "and think what you will —but know this, and make up your mind for it, that from your cradle to your grave, you move amidst a vast system of grief, where, if you are yourself spared, grief is mistress, making others pay that tribute which she disdains to accept from you. Whatever," he continues, "be the reason for this being written, this is written, and by a hand apparently which is firm to its purpose. Oh, then there is peace in acquiescing in this general order, in suffering willingly, voluntarily, in order that some one

else may be relieved; for whoever so suffers, at the feet of Christ removes suffering from another, in accordance with the principle o solidarity amongst us all, which causes that when there is a litt more grief in one soul there is less in another, just as when i rains much in one country it rains less in a neighbouring land the moral order being regulated as this physical order by th same distribution." Now, where this resignation exists we behold as in our beloved Mary Anne Lætitia, serene hours unconquere by suffering, however protracted, and by pain, however acut But these things, so tragic and divine, require a different tong from ours to dwell upon them. Let us return to what is mo in keeping with the scene before us, more plainly and general practical in regard to the subject of our present discussion. L us say with the old tragedian, "It were gain for men to assua their griefs with music, hearing the hymns of delight,—a j shared with the prosperous." For, in fact, as the Père Boutau says, "God is not angry when you address yourself to creatur to be consoled by them amidst your troubles, provided on that when you find them powerless in that respect, you ap to Him to give you what they cannot yield*."

There are no perpetual rains in nature. The night is lo that never finds the day. The poet bids us learn from th observation to cease lamenting,

> "——— sic tu sapiens finire memento
> Tristitiam."

"Affliction," says Costard, "may one day smile again; and t then, Sit thee down, sorrow!" Many of us know, indeed, the chorus of the Troades says, "how sweet to those who ha fared ill are tears, and the lamentations of mourning, and th muse whose province is grief." But still nature herself, like firm old-fashioned but good-natured nurse as she is, must b obeyed when it is a case for giving this piece of advice; an hence the general tendency of mankind to make the best of the position whatever it may be, and turn their thoughts from sa ness. She, in fact, enforces it. "Though patience be a tir mare," says Shakspeare, "yet she will plod." So, after losi

* Les Conseils de la Sagesse, 114.

those dear to us,—after little John has left us,—after his brother has left us,—after Mary Anne Lætitia has left us,—after others equally, though in another form, entwined with our heart have left us,—after the joy, and the hope, and the daily sweetness, and the lofty thoughts have left us,—we say to ourselves, though not till we have put off the conclusion as long as we could, "Since it is the pleasure of heaven that we should thus be rack'd on Fortune's wheel, let us prepare with steeled patience to tread on torment, and with minds confirmed welcome the worst." Then, almost as if nothing had happened, we even go forth for the evening, and say to each other, like Infortunio to the Shepherdess,

> "Come, let's sit down awhile, nature hath spread
> Her carpets for us here; this is the lowest,
> And yet 'tis higher than a palace—
> Let's on this bank sit down and prattle."

Or, as in the line of Keats—

> "But let me laugh awhile; I've mickle time to grieve."

Well, as some one exclaims in an old play, "to see how fortune has provided for all mortalities' ruins! Your college for your old standing scholar, your hospital for your lame, creeping soldier," and, let me add, your boat on the Thames, gliding or motionless in the rushes, for the young or young-like, pensive, resigned mourner, who, with all the power of enjoying life, has seen in the midst of his days his sun go down thus!

There is, I repeat it, what bespeaks a very different state of mind from this, much insensibility abroad, much cold and selfish indifference clothed in a kind of motley garb of philosophy and worldliness. One can't protest against it too often when it comes across us. Writing to Lepidus, Pliny blames a father for having written a panegyric upon the life of his deceased son, and then exclaims, "A long volume upon the life of a boy!" There are persons still, in plenty, who would agree with him in his censure, and think that, even in private life, without any manifestation of that kind, such sorrow as gave occasion for it is absurd. What will not such censors utter after meeting with other reminiscences, presented on former occasions of our meeting, and unburdening our heart! It is not they who can enter into the

feelings of the Duc de Saint-Simon, when he said, alluding to his wish to serve the relation of his deceased friend the Duc de Beauvilliers, at the court of Spain, "Services, proofs of gratitude rendered to persons after their death, from whom and from whose connexions one can expect nothing, are of such delicious suavity,—they infuse into the soul something so lively, so keenly delightful, so exquisite, that no sort of pleasure is comparable to what they yield*." Obduracy that has no sense of such consolations, that needs no resignation, and that suggests such criticism, may qualify men for fulfilling, unmoved, the routine of a profession, and for sharing in the orgies of bacchanals, or in the triumphs of formal moralists, by way of interlude,—but for a serene hour? but for the peace of resignation? that is a different matter. No, again and again be it said, one can t think too ill of this mode of getting rid of sorrows. But, on the other hand, what, after all, can such a mourner do? Our old dramatist even rallies him in a facetious manner, saying, "Why should he twine his arms to cables, and sigh his soul to air? sit up all night like a watch candle, and distil his brains through his eyelids?" Unwaiting time enthroned in mind must carry the day. Long to make head against this stream is simply impossible. At last he must give in, throw up his sculls, and suffer himself to drift down along with the current. It would seem as if he had to choose between the dull oblivion of necessity and the serene appeasement yielded by resignation which entails a fond memory that will endure until his heart is at rest —and for ever. Who can doubt but that for every purpose we are concerned with, the latter state of mind should have the preference? though still in sunniest moments prompting him to exclaim,

> "But, oh, the heavy change, now thou art gone,
> Now thou art gone, and never must return!"

And, besides, what avails it for any one to murmur and repine? Would the departed, wherever they may be—(but surely the gentle natures are consorting with that ineffable light represented by the morning star, their state in regard to Heaven

* Mem. tom. xix. 87.

having been contrasted with that of those Pharisees who, without ground, esteemed themselves sure of entering it)—would they, I say, wish him to indulge in such a mood? Would they be not rather pleased, to find their image associated with his thoughts, not in an impious and perhaps blaspheming, but in a resigned, and smiling, and serene hour? There is every reason to believe that they would. In this sense one might sometimes repeat the words of Chremes to Menedemus, and say, "Do, pray, spare yourself a little while. Your absent son would wish you to do so *." We repeat the poet's lines, therefore, and say of all our absent ones,

> "Day after day we think what they are doing
> In those bright realms of air;
> Year after year, their tender steps pursuing,
> Behold them grow more fair.
> Thus do we walk with them, and keep unbroken
> The bond which nature gives,
> Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
> May reach them where each lives."

The frozen conventionalism of modern life, in certain higher walks rendering new friendships with the generous so difficult to form, may deprive the survivor of what kind nature would have supplied to ward off that deeper and deeper solitude to which age robbed of its earlier companions is directed. He may say of himself in best moments, "I am not merry, but I do beguile the thing I am by seeming otherwise." In vain will you direct him to literature or poetry as a consolation. His reply may be in the lines so instructive in more ways than one,

> "Difficile est, quod, amice, mones; quia carmina lætum
> Sunt opus, et pacem mentis habere volunt."

No:—more is required than all that; therefore, as the orator even says, "pergamus ad ea solatia, quæ non modo sedatis molestiis jucunda, sed etiam hærentibus salutaria nobis esse possunt."

These consolations, of which any of us may speak without presumption, rendering possible, and even sweetening for such

* Ter. Heautont.

sufferers serene hours, may be referred to two sources, which consist in the hope of a future life, and in being reconciled to the thought of death as the passage to that other country of which we all are fellow-subjects.

Men may talk little about heaven; but yet, notwithstanding, the hope of meeting there those whom they love—even the sort of confidence that all things in a way above our present comprehension will there be redressed, though they individually may have no wrong to complain of, are at the bottom of much endurance, and of much patient, silent acquiescence in the state of things actually around us. People submit to a great deal that they would otherwise, however idly and fatally, perhaps, revolt against, for the reason that they think it is not to be perpetual. So things past redress are now with them past care; for they believe that their condition in regard to them will not last, but that a day will come when the aspirations of nature, as was before suggested, can be satisfied. Meanwhile, we may depend upon it, there are not less good order and serenity in the world, for the reason that so many persons, by resignation and corresponding manners, are trying secretly to prepare themselves for this future condition, of which the poet cites an example, saying,

> "As when a prudent man does once perceive
> That in some foreign country he must live,
> The language and the manners he does strive
> To understand and practise here,
> That he may come no stranger there;
> So well Orinda did herself prepare
> In this much-different clime, for her remove
> To the glad world of poetry and love."

In truth, without this hope at the bottom of the sack, as the French say, there is little chance of people possessing any of the qualifications of which we have been all along observing the necessity with a view to the realization of our particular object. But if they can practically bring themselves to provide for the future fulfilment of that hope, or, to use even the poet's words,

> "——— ——— Quod si
> Frigida curarum fomenta relinquere posses,
> Quo te cœlestis sapientia duceret ———."

the probability, or rather the certainty, is, that they, in some degree at least, will possess them all. To enjoy serene hours, we require, therefore, from a necessity arising out of our organization, if one may so speak, for it must be in accordance with our destiny, this ultimate resource. We require that our heart should be resigned, ready to wait, in unison with that wind of daybreak which Longfellow represents as inviting all creatures to awake for the day, until

> "It cross'd the churchyard with a sigh,
> And said, 'Not yet! in quiet lie.'"

It is necessary that one should have a capacity for entering into the feeling expressed in those lofty hymns which have descended to us from remote antiquity, as when we hear sung the sequence of Adam of St. Victor; for we, too, on the river or in the grove can have at times our sacred music as well as the gravest people,—

> "Interni festi gaudia,
> Nostra sonat harmonia,
> Quo mens in se pacifica
> Vera frequentat sabbata.
> Mundi cordis lætitia
> Odorans vera gaudia,
> Quibus prægustat avida,
> Quæ sit sanctorum gloria,
> Qua lætatur in patria
> Cœlicolarum curia.
> * * * *
> Beata illa patria
> Quæ nescit nisi gaudia
> * * * *
> Ubi dies clarissima
> Melior est quam millia,
> Luce lucens præfulgida.
> Plena Dei notitia
> Quam mens humana capere
> Nec lingua valet promere,
> Donec vitæ victoria
> Commutet hæc mortalia
> Quando Deus est omnia *."

* Adam a St. Vict. Sequentiæ, 27.

In fine, these consolations, as we said, consist also in our being reconciled with simplicity to the thought of death, through a sweet, unaffected submission to what is necessary, and regarding it as the passage to that happier existence to which the best are already gone, as Elsie felt when she wished to follow little Gertrude, and in order fully to express her motive, sung so beautifully the lines,

"The saints are dead, the martyrs dead,
And Mary, and our Lord; and I
Would follow in humility,
The way by them illumined!"

It would not answer the purpose of these rambles, either on the river or any where else, to have always a grinning skeleton with an hour-glass and a scythe at one's elbow. There is no use in scaring persons like that. To enjoy a serene hour, one must, like young people and women, get rid of such images, and contract a sort of sensible peace with what the philosophers styled the most terrible of terrible things, and then they will no longer caricature it thus. A contempt for death is not alone the principle of moral strength. It is also that of serene hours, and as some one says, "man learns every day to despise it more and more." Why should we not try to imitate Mozart in this respect? "As death," he said, "properly considered, is the true object of life, I have so familiarized myself with this real friend of man, that its image, so far from being terrible to me, is only sweet and consoling. I thank God for having given me the grace to recognize death as the key of our true happiness. I never go to bed without thinking that, young as I am, I may not awake in the morning; and yet none of those who know me can say that my manners in life are mournful or morose. I thank the Creator every day for this happiness, and I wish the same to all men, my brethren." In the priory of Malta, on Mount Aventine, is a sepulchral urn, on which death is represented surrounded by the nine muses, with their attributes. While intensely Christian, cannot men take a lesson from that in the interest of serene hours? "Ma seule force contre l'horreur naturelle qu'inspire la mort," said Madame Swetchine, "c'est d'aimer au delà*." Well, with that love reaching

* Pensées.

beyond its dominion, you have death associated with what is intended to be expressed by the nine muses and the graces too, which is a thing of all ages, a thing of truth and of the heart for ever*. "Compare," says Ruskin, "the horror of a certain king at the sight of the tower of St. Denis, with the feeling which prompted the Scaligeri at Verona to set their tombs within fifteen feet of their palace walls." Truly, a good heart's worth gold, let who will have said it. Knocked about as more or less we all are in this world of distressful changes within and without us, why not, like the young and sprightly that we have known and loved, many of whose arch and deep words have been heard on all our past excursions, feel serene and at peace with death as with every thing that we are willed to meet ere arriving at the end for which we were created? And what is it after all in the case of people like those old princes of Verona, than whom we may believe no followers of the humility of St. Paul ever trusted in themselves less and in Christ more? The answer seems to be given in very few words, and in such as we have had occasion before to notice as falling from the lips of our now lost companions,—"He hath delivered my eyes from tears and my feet from falling," says the Church, in allusion to death,—"oculos meos a lacrymis, pedes meos a lapsu," as if no more were meant by it in her view of the matter. Truly, then, if that be all, nothing very fearful or lamentable can be this casualty, call it what you will. Poor Berinthia might well say,

> "———— It will be easy to die;
> All life is but a walk in misery."

Cicero, left with only the faint gleams of what is called natural light, thought that Crassus was not so much snatched away from life by heaven, as favoured by it, death seeming rather to have been granted to him as a benefit. How much more ought our people, possessing such advantages, to reconcile their minds in serene hours to the thought of that ultimate expedition which even leads them to a place more crowded than any of their best loved haunts, since, as the dead outnumber

* If the English are to be brought back to the devotion of all souls, it won't be by the presenting them on that day with banners showing skulls and cross-bones.

the living, it takes them "ad plures," to τοὺς πλείονας, to the million, as we should say! And if the passage seems to faint hearts obscure and difficult, with sinister accompaniments, why it may only turn out, even in their case, to be something like one of our locks on the Thames, in which you sink down in darkness amidst the noise of rushing waters, to have gates thrown open before you through which, in the hushed air, softly and silently you glide at once into the bright illumination of the sun, and find yourself amidst sloping lawns and groves musical with birds and whatever can enhance the universal charm of a scene to which nothing beautiful or sweet is wanting. The previous moment was alarming to the nervous frames of those who had never before been in such a position, common as it is; and this one that we speak of is, of course, a lock which no one alive in this world has passed before; but here the light is shining through transparent gates, and it is only the necessary issue to those upper, and deeper, and serener waters on which we were intended to float for ever. It is only, perhaps, a fresh verification of the Persian proverb, that "the narrowest gorge of the defile is at the entrance of the plain."

Upon the whole, therefore, we should be able, in a serene resigned mood, without losing any taste for calm enjoyment, to repeat the poet's lines, which, at this moment, in the departure of one of the just, whose fear and holiness remembered suggest more of the dreadful side of the vision than we otherwise might like to dwell on, seem to the writer of these pages verified, and say,

"Oh, holy passing bell!
Mingling thy solemn knell
Thus with our tears;
While, like the shuttle's flight,
Like the short summer night,
Fleet our brief years;
Prompt us His will to do,
Bid us His favour sue,
Warn us His wrath to rue,
Unto whose eye,
Unto whose bar of dread,
Judge of the quick and dead,
Every hour's silent tread
Bringeth us nigh."

We see, therefore, how by the hand of a gracious poet, showing the consequence of this general resignation to what is divinely ordained, men can be led gently to that spirit of acquiescence, and to that will of obedience, which, under the light of faith, constitute the fountain that supplies all the rivulets by which their rambles in serene hours are enlivened, irrigated, and refreshed; their faces, however pensive, being still serene,—"serene, as if with some inward sense of duty,—pensive, as with the resignation which accepts, in regard to earthly happiness, patience instead of hope," or we should say rather, which is animated with a different hope, a supreme and infinite hope which needs conjunction with no other.

In closing this day's conference, how many examples might be produced from literature and from life around us of the effects of resignation in rendering it possible for men beaten by misfortunes, suffering, heart-struck, or else wronged and provoked, to enjoy these intervals of sweet and inspiring serenity! "Never man," says the Duc de Saint-Simon, referring to one instance observed by himself, "possessed his soul in peace more than the Duc de Chevreuse. As is said in the psalm, he used to carry it in his hands. The disorder of his affairs, the disgrace which threatened one time to overwhelm him on the question of quietism, the loss of his children, the death of the dauphin, no event could prostrate him, though his heart was good and tender. He offered all to God, whom he never lost sight of; and retained all through life his gentleness, his affability, and his taste for mirth and recreation *." What serene hours have even the sick often! An illness is sometimes more than "a halt in the midst of vice." It is the way to contentment of heart which is never afterwards troubled; and even where the material suffering is to be for life, there may be a continued serenity, as was witnessed in the celebrated instance of him who was called the "malade de la reyne," the patient of the bower.

"Scarro æger infando data præda dolori,
Non Fatum crudele, Jovem non clamat iniquum;
Iratis parcit Superis, sortique malignæ,
Et patitur sævos invicta mente labores,

* Tom. x. 271.

Jucundumque affert dira inter spicula vultum.
Nec simulata gerit, personam indutus honestam,
Vel mista ridet, veluti Mezentius, ira,
Sed purum sine fraude et laxis ridet habenis."

As for general effects, let one instance suffice to show what they are. "Yesterday," writes Balzac in one of his letters, "was a charming day, and I never enjoyed myself in the fields more. The peace was general, from the highest region of the air to the surface of the earth; the river was as smooth as a lake. I wish you had passed this happy day with us, instead of being shut up in your Angoulême. You would have had those pleasures of ancient kings who drank from fountains, and fed on what fell from trees. This is really a spot to wish for, and to paint; and here I pass the sweetest hours of my life. The waters and the trees supply continual freshness and verdure. The swans that used to cover the river have retired to a canal, which gives dreams to the greatest talkers as soon as they approach it, and on whose banks I am always happy, whether joyous or pensive. If I only rest here a short while, I seem to return to my first innocence. My desires, my fears, and my hopes cease all of a sudden. I have no more passions, or if I have I can at least govern them. The great Cardinal D. comes here sometimes to change felicity, abdicating that severe virtue and that greatness which dazzles the world to assume gentler qualities and a more serene majesty. Here he finds consolations for his recent loss, which are not to be found in the discourses of philosophy or in the crowd of the high world."

Thus do we see verified the wisdom and discernment of our great dramatist who represents, as an actual element of happiness, the experience which in this ramble has been occupying our thoughts, saying in his playful and Socratic style, not without a strict attention to the phenomenon of nature, that to have had losses may even contribute, in conformity with a law of mental philosophy, to our enjoyment of a serene hour. Thus let what wind will blow, if we only possess this qualification, we can accomplish our purpose; for, as Felice says,

"When the clouds let fall their show'rs
We have at hand a hundred bow'rs,

Where, under sweet-brier, safe are we,
And honey-dropping woodbine-tree."

Before shaking hands, and wishing good night, as none of us are solemn affected people, we must admit that, in spite of these hundred bowers, and whatever we can imagine of shelter and refreshment, this has been a pensive ramble all through; there is no one of the party disposed to deny it. So, like the bereaved companions sung by Homer, they rowed all the day thoughtful, sitting in order, and beating with their oars the water, on which they gazed lamenting, though resigned; but when the sun had set they still thought upon their dear companions, and mentally conversed with their fading memories, for in this life every thing fades—sometimes even our heart itself, and therefore all its images—to be revived again and brought out in everlasting distinctness, let us hope, elsewhere in the regions of immutability.

"But come! let Memory be mute;
Its archives do not always suit.
Let grief and sadness fall asleep;
To finish well is not to weep.
There is wherewith in air and sky
To please and also edify.
For what within our mortal sight
Is half so fair or half so bright
As there what almost meets the eye
Of bliss and immortality?
So here let shades and shadows cease,
Yielding to light that gives release
From all that's meant to pass away,
Reviving in an endless day.
And sooth these precepts wise and long
Were less inspiring than a song,
Which sometimes, whatsoe'er we think,
Can soothe us when our spirits sink;
While reason, howsoe'er we boast,
Oft fails us when we need it most.
To make you merry, too, and wise,
Was my pledg'd promis'd enterprise.
In too much thought there is no relish,
When gone is what we love and cherish.

Rise, then, and sing, or row away;
We've had enough of thought to-day.
Perhaps you deem'd me not a poet,
But though late I'd have you know it.
There's no one who in idle mood
Becomes not almost another Hood.
And grief that tends to make us wild
Will ape the manners of a child.
I wish I'd put it all in rhyme;
But now we have no longer time
To treat things in a lighter style,
And sorrow though resign'd beguile.
Our nature yearns for what is bright,
But now I wish you all good night."

For of those exercising themselves on the river, whether joyous or pensive, as well as of those sitting in their well-inhabited houses, sleep will come at last to the eyelids, that they may cease from their condition, whatever it be; for, as the same Homer says, no mortals can be always sleepless,

"——— Man's o'er-labour'd sense
Repairs itself by rest."

Each of our quaint spirits might, therefore, now address his next neighbour in the words of Prospero to Miranda, and say,

"Thou art inclined to sleep; 'tis a good dulness,
And give it way; I know thou canst not choose."

Adding, perhaps, for yet lively ones to hear with Titania herself,

"——— Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices, and let me rest."

So, having disembarked, and mounted on some carriage at the bridge, falling occasionally on each other's shoulders, as if sleep had seized them wholly, the return home along the dusky road is made in silence.

CHAPTER XIX.

T is a mistake which some sensible people are apt to fall into, to suppose that in order to have a few pleasant hours on the Thames the thermometer must be at eighty degrees in the shade. "We are aware," as a merry author says, "that the unthinking part of the population will meet us here with the assertion that dark skies and bad colds are inseparable on the river." The sun on a winter's day, or even towards the vernal equinox, is thought by them to be a traitor; and they will reply, in answer to your invitation, in the verses of Mathieu Laensberg,

> "Qu'il luise ou qu'il luiserne,
> L'ours rentre en sa caverne."

But, not to remark that "hoary-headed frosts will sometimes fall in the lap of the crimson rose," there are very wholesome clear fresh days in February as in November, and even January, when the sun keeps popping in and out, and it is very pleasant to be afloat, committed partly to the mercy of a land-flood, which then imparts to our in general silver'd stream the classic colour of the yellow Tiber. Then, if you embark at Hampton Court, where such strong tubs as you can hire, fit you might think for encountering ice on arctic rivers, will, on days of this kind, answer your purpose as well as the lightest wherry, or rather indeed better, you can disport yourself and company most charmingly among the floating timbers and the rough stakes of willows and osiers over the submerged islands, which offer no impediment to your course from the Middlesex shore to Ditton. It does not matter who takes the sculls now, though I grant you may have a hard tug to get back to the bridge, as I have had ere now, and as Mascarille says,

> "Malgré le froid, je sue encore de mes efforts;"

but if you descend no lower than the tops of the osier-groves

about the Swan, you will accomplish the return without incurring the necessity of any such heroic effort, as on the same waters on another occasion, in the month of June, devolved upon some one, that need not be named, with others, when, being on board a low flat fishing-craft called the Trout, hired at the bridge, the party had to pull against a rival crew, who would infallibly have beaten it but for its state of desperation, which was called for by peculiar circumstances that do not concern the world in general. To return, however, to the winter flood. I say then that, without our being Ditton boys, we can strongly recommend it as capable of yielding hours so serene that they will be remembered afterwards as a joy for ever, still granting, of course, that much of the charm will depend on who the company may be; but with youth sitting aft, and prudence at the sculls, all is sure to be delightful. These flooded woods of osiers are very favourable, too, for conversation while your boat drifts amongst them. There is, besides, loitering on the Hampton bridge, wondering at what keeps it from falling like its late more solemn neighbour at Walton, or repeating the lines of Longfellow, though you are in a mood to be as merry as a wagtail,

> "Yet whenever I cross the river
> On its bridge with wooden piers,
> Like the odour of brine from the ocean
> Comes the thought of other years."

There is also sauntering along before and after you embark, when you can think of many things besides these Pontine mysteries. The season itself on the present occasion is suggestive, and might direct us in choosing a subject for the last of our discussions. "The affinities of this season," says Madame Swetchine, "with our own poor destiny appear to me both mysterious and sweet. Twilight is so charming for him who believes in a dawn and rising up!" However, there are flowers yet on the sward, some leaves still linger on the boughs, though there is a something in the air that tells of the steps of the coming winter. It is a day belonging to a brief and pathetic season, as De Quincey calls it, of farewell summer resurrection, which, under one name or other, is known almost every where.

In France it is St. Martin's summer, in Germany the Girl's summer, in Acadia the summer of All Saints.

"Fill'd is the air with a dreamy and magical light; and the landscape
Lies as if new-created in all the freshness of childhood.
Peace seems to reign upon earth, and the restless heart of the ocean
Is far away for a moment consoled."

It is like the lambent and fitful gleams from an expiring lamp, mimicking what is called the lightning before death in patients when close upon their end. Thus sweet and ghostly in its soft golden smiles, silent as a dream, and quiet as the dying trance of a saint, fades through all its stages this departing day. The lingering powers of the beautiful season are now exhibiting themselves for the last time. It is

"The gentle summer, with her balmy breath,
Still sweeter than before
When nearer death,
And brighter every day the smile she wore *."

The very light is fast diminishing in duration and intensity; the nights grow colder and longer. Well, as Titania says,

"The human mortals want their winter here;"

and so we should not complain when

"——————— after summer evermore
Succeeds barren winter, with his wrathful, nipping cold;
Since cares and joys abound as seasons fleet."

But after so many pleasant hours passed together, having had so much to be grateful for, what can we do better than try to recall, in a general way, what we may have heard from eloquent lips like those of an Emidius, and conclude all our excursions by turning towards a better light than that of the sun by considering, as that reverent father so impressively exposes in our southern suburb †, how good is God, and how every heart should love Him? So natural, indeed, is this reflection, that we find

* Procter. † Peckham.

Walton concluding one of his river excursions with the very same remark, saying,—"Let us not forget to praise God for the innocent mirth and pleasure we have met with since we met together. What would many people give to see the pleasant rivers, and meadows, and flowers, and fountains, that we have met with since we commenced our excursions!"

Oh! let me hope, these rambles now gone by
The young have pleased and served to edify.
Children oft represent, in brief, the man,
Better than many bearded sages can.
The summer is gone,—the autumn bids adieu!
Only in mind are all we had in view.
Yet nothing perishes, and nothing dies,
Though love alone will prompt our many sighs.
Oh, music! wedded to the deepest thought,
Come to our aid, and grant what we have sought.
For joy and mirth we all were born,
However some be now forlorn.
We might have said the whole in song,
And done no graver interest wrong.
There is a way to hand down truth
Which more agrees with joy and youth
Than our late prosy pedant style,
With which we drawl'd on many a mile.
And now at last, I know not why,
Fancy suggests a fear lest I
Should oft in this respect have fail'd,
Whether we row'd, or stopp'd, or sail'd.
But it's too late to change my way
By singing what we had to say.
Yet, just for once, I must premise
What need not fill you with surprise,
That the last inference we draw
Forms no exception to this law.
Verse suits the gayest, brightest thing;
But what is brighter than the spring
From which flow all that charms the mind
That through the universe you find?
Then might we sing of love divine,
And in all nature see it shine;

For this has nothing to appal,
But it should cheer, enrapture all.
Are flowers dark? Do meadows lour?
Do we dislike a fragrant bower?
Then why should He who made them fill
Our heart with shadows of aught ill?
Why clothe in language stern and grave
What can from every anguish save?
Since love divine is sweetest food
For man in sprightly gayest mood;
Though some so foolishly agree
That only, mourner, 'tis for thee;
While you should this love and gladness see
Combined in perfect harmony.
The very lines so rude and free
That seem but to suit pure jollity,
May prove sublimest and the best
When this is to be plain exprest.
For what are grave and pompous chants
Compared with what our fancy haunts,
When to our God we raise our eyes,
And see Him reigning in the skies?
Oh! then we feel our strength is vain,
Content with the most simple strain
To lisp out what is sung above,
That truth is joy and God is love.

This, then, is to be our last excursion,—we say, of course, for this season,—but that in many cases means something else that one does not exactly like to utter, implying it, however, in fact just as much as if we were heard exclaiming with the poet, "O ye fountains and rivers, and ye meads and groves, that shared my nature's culture, farewell for ever!" The zephyrs and the swallows, with which we commenced our first rambles, are being now succeeded by harbingers that at all events admonish the most frisky amongst us to finish discussions in the open air,

"For though we sleep or wake, or roam or ride,
Aye fleeth the time, it will no man abide."

Let us suppose it, however, as I said just now, still such a glorious day as often brings to a close a fine season; for our subject will demand a great elasticity of mind, and even buoyancy of animal spirits, in order that we may not view it in those dull, sombre hues, and in that cold, austere, unhearty way, in which a heavy and materialized, as well as a purely scholastic disposition is so apt to regard it, being itself a thing to make even the flesh rejoice,—a thing most delicate, yielding a kind of ethereal felicity, a pleasure for which there is not a name, resembling that which is inspired by the presence of one beloved and venerated, or by looking at the pale blue over the mountains of a western horizon on a fine summer's morning,—a theme romantic too, beautiful and lightsome,—a theme for poets, a theme for women, a theme for children, a theme for sages like a Picus of Mirandula, who possessed in his own mind the freshness and simplicity of them all,—a theme, in a word, sweet and felicitous beyond the infinity of thought. At the mere announcement by any one that he is about to speak of the love of God, one feels suddenly transported to epochs and places full of even a poetic charm, to Mount Cassino and Assisi, to Mirandula and Florence, in the olden time, or to Sorrez, Ushaw, and Clonliff in our own,—one feels as if on an eminence beholding all that is sweet, and charming, and wise, and great in mankind,—troops of angelic youth at the feet of pontiffs that recall St. John, schools of sages inspiring veneration, kings of thought, such as ruled the civilization of holy and poetic ages, women such as dissolve our souls in love and reverence, and, in fine, the monarchs whose sole ambition was to make the world happy by giving its Creator and Redeemer glory.

"It is the part of a slow mind," says Cicero, "to follow rivulets, and not to see the fountains of things; and it belongs to our age and habits to approach the spring-head, and to behold that from which all things flow." In like manner we may say that it is the natural bourn of this last excursion to mount to the very upper source of all from which true serenity issues, and by requiring as a qualification the love of God, to complete in one summary, as it were, the other dispositions which have hitherto been discussed without direct or at least continu-

reference to it, though all the while each of them was secretly depending on it for its wholesomeness and its vitality. People may not, of course, be always conscious of the part that it is playing within them, just as while attending to corporal wants in an habitual manner, one generally knows little or nothing in an anatomical way about what it is that enables the body to exercise its different functions; but as a man would be scouted for his pains who should pretend in scientific language that we could get on at all after having destroyed, or paralyzed, or in some way or other lost any one of our vital organs, so assuredly, if the question were formally proposed, he would not be acquitted in the little secret court of each good fellow's judgment of the charge of being a great simpleton, and something worse besides, who would utter a surmise that without the ability to love God, and without a sense of the existence too of that love at least in some corner or other of the heart,—for I would on every subject speak as behoves one in whom only the most popular language is becoming,—any living being, participant of the human nature, could enjoy what assuredly requires this spring to be partly in order, namely, a serene hour. The fact evidently is, that man originally and constitutionally is a religious animal. Take him at any age, under every condition of mind, and rank, and sex, and you must discover that it is his grand distinction to be so; which seems indeed but a natural result, from the fact that, as the Church says, he possesses a faculty in his reason by which can be proved the existence of God, the spirituality of the soul, and the liberty of man*; though, indeed, without a demonstration he would find it difficult otherwise to give an answer to Bossuet, when he says at the beginning of his incomparable Elévations, "Why should there be the imperfect and not the perfect? Why should that which is nearest to nothing exist, and that which has no affinity with it not exist?" Such deductions and such reflections, which belong to the domain of common sense, render it necessary that the religious sentiment should enter into the definition of man; and consequently, when, like the sapient French professor of our day, any one refuses to believe that there is in the universe a superior intelligence to

* Propositions approved of by the H. S. 1854.

that of man*; when instead of recognizing an infinite Spirit in a personal state, he pretends to see nature only in an infinite force in an impersonal state; when he refuses systematically to be kept in conformity with this ideal of his Creator,—to comply with this instinct of his primitive, constitutional, or, if you will, even organic nature,—all things of his own sooner or later will be found in every respect to fall to confusion, to go wrong with him in every direction, or to stop altogether.

The subject,—as already suggested, but it can never be too often repeated,—which, so far from being necessarily abstract or scholastic, much less dismal, as some contrive to make it, like a gigantic bell, of which the tone even at noonday makes you feel interiorly uncomfortable, not to express it in more precise though homely terms, might, in the hands of a great artist, be matter for a song on a May morning, intercalated with the melody of birds and the sound of a fountain among the flowers, —can be considered for the sake of order in a twofold manner thus:—serene hours, by conferring a better tone, mentally and bodily, to the system, conduce to the love of God, which is a state of health; and reciprocally the love of God, which supposes such health, not only conduces, for somewhat similar reasons, but is essential to the realization of serene hours.

> The first idea and the incipient thought
> Of showing how to gain what has been sought,
> When we think hours serene, the sweetest, best,
> And on the Thames or in the grove would rest,
> Must tend to waken in our inmost mind
> The love of Him from whom is all we find.
> From Him not only happiness must flow,
> But little pleasures that we have below,—
> The boat, the path, sweet resting on the sod,
> The garden fragrance,—we owe all to God;
> So that the heart which seeks a merry day
> Directs the soul upon a heavenly way.

Of course none of "us" are properly qualified for touching such a theme as this, the mere announcement of which, as we

* Renan, Avenir de la Métaphysique. Revue des Deux Mondes, Jan. 1860.

have just observed, raises up an image of ineffable grandeur, as being a combination of heart and mind, of poetry and intelligence, of the sensuous and the spiritual; but renouncing at once all attempt at a commensurate dignity of style, and expressing ourselves after our river fashion, and like Cervantes, I will say, as our sleeves are already tucked up, let us go on to speak of it in the way we can, and that possibly, for some vagrants like ourselves, may be even the best way, when all things that ought to be attended to are considered. In the first place, these goings out for the day, these rides, and rows, and walks, excursions, rambles, or whatever you choose to call them, combining in the open air refreshment for the mind and body, with observation and a little silent reflection also to boot, on things relative to the heart, which come more home to us than what is purely intellectual, seem to supply a kind of preparation not according ill with the love of truth in the highest and most divine acceptation of the word, which we all know without thinking about it, perhaps, as much as we ought with profit, was announced to the world in a very simple, natural, and often, in point of fact, ambulatory kind of way, either while passing through a corn-field on a Saturday afternoon, just after the fashion of our juvenile population, or on a grassy slope, inviting people to lie down on it and open their basket, or in a suburban garden within a walk of the city, or roaming over mountains, where many of us would wish to be, or while seated in a boat, as we ourselves are now, or walking on the banks of the broad water, as when we stray through Twickenham meadows, where at high flood the river might be taken for an expanse to correspond with the Galilean Lake we read of, or sitting beside a wayside well or fountain, with some poor women, such as still all the world over seem to have an inclination to rest awhile at a spot of that kind wherever it is found, though we have no longer what existed formerly in France, fountains actually called of the Samaritan, where used to be represented in bronze the actors in that divine scene at the well of Jacob*. It is of this very idea respecting the fact

* Since this was written, such fountains have been erected in London. May God bless those who raised them!

of the open air and a walk having been employed on divine occasions, that a great English painter of our times * seems to have taken advantage in his exquisite picture of The Visitation, representing our Lady when she went to communicate the good news to her cousin St. Elizabeth, and passed through the hill country on foot, the scenery of which, down to the flowers on which she treads, he paints with such a love for nature; and when as she went, not so rapt we may believe as to be wholly without feeling the influence of the beauty shed around her, she worshipped. Even our kind of scenes, and indeed, be it repeated, the mere open air itself, seem to have a certain useful effect of their own to accomplish with respect to us, in counteracting and expelling not a few mental diseases, which very often seriously interfere with the action of the highest and most delicate springs of our inward life, while people are keeping in retreat within four walls, surrounded with aids, as it is thought, of an artificial kind for promoting all intellectual perfection. As an old writer says in his quaint style, "Truth is no doctoress at all times. She may have taken no degrees at Paris or Oxford, amongst great clerks, disputants, subtle Aristotles, men 'nodosi ingenii,' able to take Lully by the chin; but oftentimes to such people as all our excursionists are, 'idiota,' or common persons, no great things, melancholizing in woods where waters are, quiet places by rivers, fountains, whereas the silly man, expecting no such matter, thinketh only how best to delectate and refresh his mynde continually with nature, her pleasant scenes, woods, waterfalls,—or Art her statelie gardens, parks, terraces, Belvideres,—on a sudden the goddesse herselfe, Truth, has appeared, with a shyning lyght and a sparklyng countenance, so as yee may not be able lightly to resist her."

So much then for the general way of our proceeding in this case, involving an accidental but not less beneficial conformity to what is best and highest. On turning to details, if we look back on the different qualifications which were said to be necessary in order to enjoy serene hours, we shall ascertain the curious fact, that actually there is not one of them which, though each seems to have been fixed upon with a view only

* Mr. Herbert.

to enhance the pleasure of a holiday, has not a tendency in itself to promote the love of God. In order to see this fact clearly established, let us only recur to them in the order in which they were proposed to us. A sense of beauty then, in the first instance, was said to be necessary. Well, without being a Platonist, and without having read St. Augustine *, what man is there, not a profligate, with a spark of intelligence, possessing that sense, who must not almost inevitably, sooner or later, if he ever comes to think about it at all, be directed to comprehend within the range of his love Him who created the beautiful, created the taste for it in man, and from whom all beauty most indisputably flows? "The fine arts," says Dupanloup, bishop of Orleans, "seem to me analogous to those shining summits where God is more familiar, which are not indeed heaven, but which elevate our regards above the earth, and direct them towards the sphere of eternal things. It is no exaggeration then to say that art is of divine origin. The Spirit of God even has consecrated it, as Fenelon remarks. In fact," continues the illustrious prelate, "I maintain that art, or the love of beauty, thus rightly understood, conduces to the love of God, while reciprocally the love of God contributes to the fecundity of art †." In fact, my good fellow, whatever you may think of yourself, you are only one of those who love the beauty from which all other beauties proceed. You have merely to look at a hand or an ankle, at a tree or a flower, and you will perceive, as even poor Cicero says, that all this perfect and admirable beauty is the result of exactly the same sort of thing as we understand by art; not of chance, to which it cannot be referred without absurdity. It is all effected by skill, by intelligence, not by a fortuitous concurrence of atoms; it is all made, as we see it, "arte, non casu." You might think that every part was for use. So it is, no doubt—"nusquam tamen est ulla pars nisi venusta ‡." This is what he calls on orators to remark. How much more natural is it to ascribe such thoughts to every

* De Musica, i.

† Lettres sur les Études qui peuvent convenir aux Loisirs d'un Homme du Monde.

‡ De Oratore.

common person in a quiet way, who, like most people, may have a habit of falling in love with beauty of one kind or other, and who has ever meditated on it for ten minutes, though his object may not be exactly to deliver an oration about it. "There are certain ideas," says Butler, "which we express by the words, order, harmony, proportion, beauty, the farthest removed from any thing sensual. Now these beget that approbation, love, delight, and even rapture, which is seen in some persons' faces when these objects are presented to their minds. The faculties from which we are capable of these pleasures, and the pleasures themselves, are as natural and as much to be accounted for as any sensual appetite and pleasure whatever. Now these things meet in the Author of nature, who is consequently the highest object of love to the mind." In the world, it is true, as in the Arabian Nights, there can be found some Ufreet inviting you to consort with accomplished ugliness—"the Lord of all that is detestable to look at! What a jurisdiction!" exclaims a poet. But people such as we are supposing seldom subject themselves to it. They appeal to a different court; and "in the love of God," as Richard of St. Victor says, "they sooner or later find that all vain desires are lost, and all true desires perfected. God, no doubt," he adds, "made whatever the sensualist loves. It should be loved with order, and then all will be right, charity being then reordained*." Every thing, in short, sweet and beautiful that we find in persons and in things, has a voice calling on us to love the Creator of such sweetness and of such beauty. Though you had a beard as long as my arm, with frowns to match it, one can hardly see how you can escape from this conclusion.

> All beauty that the universe reveals
> Where'er we trace on earth its lovely seals,
> Whether in women, men, or flowers bright,
> Whether in colours that entrance the sight,
> Or forms of animals, or gems of stone,
> Must flow even instantly from Him alone.
> Internal beauty too is but his gift
> When it moulds features as the thought is swift.

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* De Exterminatione Mali.

In beauty infinite the schoolmen even say
Exists what appears but destined for a day *.
Corporeal beauty even they opine
Must, with the spiritual, for ever shine;
So that what's lovely to the human eye
Must shine above through all eternity,
Nature and body in one sense combin'd
To please with its beauty the eternal mind.
The love of beauty must then for ever be
A love of God involved in mystery.
But while the sophists and the silly crowd
Seek not through lightness or some science proud
To love the great Artist who created all,
Low at his feet in love will others fall.

Then, again, it was said that a youthful spirit was necessary; and it will not require now any such facial deformity as would consist in having a hundred eyes, to perceive that a spirit of this kind, whatever airs it may occasionally put on, conduces to the same result. Poets, at least, are willing to recognize the connexion, as when we read,

"With childish rev'rence my young lips did say
The prayer my pious mother taught to me:
'O gentle God! O let me strive alway
Still to be wise, and good, and follow Thee!'"

The poetic tendency of youth is itself co-operative in this direction, as may be witnessed even in Virgil, of whom Sainte-Beuve says, that in regard to sentiments he is sometimes half-way to Christianity, and even on its threshold. In fact, who does not know that, generally, the vernal and poetic section of a population is pious in a way of its own; that at proper times and places it shows itself so, producing a sort of Abel character which is nowhere uncommon, though at others it appears represented only in the form of a lad such as Gratiano speaks of, "a kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy, a judge's clerk, a prating boy, that takes much pains in writing?" "You need not laugh," says Janin's Rameau, "when a boy I admired immortal objects, because then I knew I had an immortal soul, a soul and

* Lessius on the Divine Perfections.

not a machine." What feeling is the most hostile to the love of God? Those competent to answer the question tell us that it is insolence. "Insolence," says Richard of St. Victor, "is represented as a lion standing on two legs like a man. This is the state of pride erecting itself against God in monstrous fashion, and reproving his judgments. Such men weave certain complaints as if rational, and furnishing causes for murmuring, as if they were just; and this is to present a belluine instead of a human form, presenting irrational complaints for reasons*." Youth, too, I am "free to confess," may be represented as a lion standing on two legs; but it is not exactly against God, or against those who are his ministers, that it erects itself. The sweet-faced modicum of our company is not a spirit of that quirk. Look at him when you can catch him at his prayers; for he is not like the man of whom Aimwell says "he does pray but once a year, and that's for fine weather in harvest." Youth hopes always; and such hope is in affinity with the love of God; who is, therefore, addressed by the Church in these remarkable words of the gradual at Septuagesima:—"Adjutor in opportunitatibus, in tribulatione sperent in te qui noverunt te." On how many occasions has hope been justified, when by a Divine Providence the event, during opportunities, has realized what it, trusting in that assistance, dared to conceive? "The world," as Swift says, "is divided into two sects, those that hope the best, and those that fear the worst." Youth belongs to the former, and says, like Hippolito, in its innocence,

> "Yet I will call my conscience to account
> For all, and throw myself upon heaven's charity."

The inference need not be expressed. It seems to be as inevitable as before, that is, of course, so far as respects the tendency of this spirit.

> To doubt the brightness of our early age
> Is not the part of wisdom in a sage.
> But who can well love the attributes of youth,
> And not love Him who gives it his own truth?

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* De Eruditione Hominis interioris, lib. iii. c. 7.

All that so charms us when the heart is young,
All that receives the praise of mortal tongue,
In childlike innocence and childlike joy,
Excluding what can fancy's self annoy,
Has still a voice, as if a tongue of fire,
To say, "Love Him" who can such grace inspire.
To be sincere and loving, dauntless, gay,
Is all the while to love God and to pray.
You love the child? Then love his Maker too,
Or your love lies, and never can be true.

We were next told to insist on a love of nature; and this is an influence of which we find that the operation, when not counteracted by a perverse and artificial direction of mind, is similar. The spirit of modern times, it is true, seems even in good men rather to overlook this inference. We hear of blessing God, as indeed men well may every hour, in reference to the mysteries of religion, and in a formula of words that cannot be too often repeated; but we do not hear added the words of sacred writ, which seem so fitting to proclaim the duty of completing that act, calling on us to bless Him also in his works—"Benedicite Dominum in operibus suis*." Still a man must have a forehead villainous low, such as we seldom see in churches, or indeed in the company of fine dashing fellows on the river, who can talk of loving nature, and not acknowledge that it calls on him trumpet-tongued to love its Author. Does not even the song of the music-hall attest the fact when describing the sound of waters, it proceeds with—

"Yes, but there's something greater
That speaks to the heart alone—
The voice of the great Creator
Dwells in that mighty tone?"

When Ampère used to discourse on the wonders of nature with a young pupil in his cabinet, he would often place his head between his two hands and exclaim, as if in an ecstasy, "Que Dieu est grand! Ozanam, que Dieu est grand!" True, as Richard of St. Victor says, "a certain teaching and study are a

* Eccles. xxxix.

necessary supplement to nature's voice; for," as he continues, "we are often led to love something from affection, and we struggle against it by reason; and often we love something from deliberation, which yet we do not in the least affect by the appetite of desire. Spiritual things we never love from desire, unless we inflame our minds to those affections with great study*." But still, all the things of life being good, there is no attentive observation of them, no observing them even in the natural way that young men and women often have, and, what is not at all foreign to their habits, no reflection on them, possible, without being moved to love their Maker, who must so love his own work, that methinks one cannot hear the birds sing at early dawn upon a May morning without being impressed with the idea that, if it were for nothing else, He must be present, as it were, to listen to them. Every one cannot be expected to view natural common things and reflect upon them with as much penetration and piety as Louis of Grenada, in his delightful catechism; but certainly it is not supposing too much to suggest that each of our excursionists passing along the Thames should occasionally feel and speak like the Moor, of whom that admirable author writes, who, on crossing the river which is between Castro and Cordova, and remarking how it flowed with a rapid stream unceasingly, turned to his master, and exclaimed, in his simple jargon, "Flow, flow, flow, without ever being empty; flow on for ever without once stopping. Oh, how great is God!" But without even thinking of the utility, a taste for the beauty of God's work can never be far from passing into a taste, not for "a thoughtful intercourse," such as a brilliant French writer professes to have cultivated, "with the ideal of light and of infinite perfections," but a taste more homely, more old-fashioned, more comprehensible, and more enlightened too, like that of the fathers of the desert sitting on the rocks, with flowers at their feet, for the personal God himself, which is synonymous with great and actual love for Him. We might cite even puerile examples. Longfellow's Golden Legend can supply one of them, as in the lines,—

* De Gradibus Charitatis.

"Early in the morning
The sultan's daughter
Walk'd in her father's garden,
Gathering the bright flowers,
All full of dew.
And as she gather'd them,
She wonder'd more and more
Who was the master of the flowers,
And made them grow
Out of the cold, dark earth.
'In my heart,' she said,
'I love him; and for him
Would leave my father's palace
To labour in the garden.'"

People who are thoughtful can be drawn to the same conclusion by more subtle observations. For, as Schelling says, and every artist will have learned it from his own impressions, a "man cannot admire or fittingly represent any natural object without mounting up to the primal love; he must remove himself from the product or creature, for the sake of raising himself up to the creative power, and seizing that intellectually or spiritually, which he cannot do without loving it. Hereby he rises into the domain of pure ideas; he forsakes the creature in order to win it back again with a thousandfold profit; and in this way he will come back to nature indeed." The passage seems but a development of the thought of our Cowper, in the line,

"Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works."

"The creation," as St. Augustine says, "is a permanent hymn in honour of God, rising up from all creatures and directing us to love Him." Of course men may resist this influence, and refuse to be moved; but there it is still, the impelling force, and our excursions, frolicsome as they often are, involve its operation. "In his triple creation God," says Richard of St. Victor, "can be investigated and known,—in the world, and in the things created for its decoration, in man, and in the angels. Through these three divisions the soul can go about thirsting after God, to find Him. From the visible world the invisible

Creator can be known, for clearly God made it, and not itself;" "for," as the Chancellor d'Aguesseau remarks, "if even in the throwing of dice there is no chance, since in whatever way they fall it is only the result of causes and in accordance with the laws of motion, how can any one pretend that it is chance and not the living God who produced the complicated machine of the universe*?" "Well, then," continues Richard, "this vision is common to all, both to bad and good; and in this way all men see God. In this way some at least of the philosophers see Him, who yet by love do not find Him. Therefore from this vision afar off the soul proceeds to contemplate man, who, although he passes in an image, yet bears a similitude to Him in virtues and in faculties. Finally, as nature shows a continuity in all parts, and no sudden or abrupt interruptions, we may contemplate Him in the angelic race known, one might therefore say, to nature; and beyond that there is only Himself†." But this influence of which we speak tends to give us a sense, not alone of the greatness,—to inspire fear, which is the beginning, not the whole of wisdom,—but of the loveable nature of God, which naturally produces love when men think about it. It tends to awaken in us a knowledge of those perfections which it seems to be the object of some studious men to lose sight of, or, with the best intentions, to involve in great obscurity, by their exclusive attention to some one or other attribute in the sense that they understand it, which does not seem always to be a heavenly one. Therefore Richard of St. Victor, warning us not to confound religion with the foolishness of men,—for grave men, begging their pardons, seem at times rather involved that way,—cites the words of Ecclesiasticus, "Memorare Testamenti Altissimi, et despice ignorantiam proximi‡."

How often might it be well to make this distinction with a similar reference to the divine mercy, which, though displayed in creation, he desires us to regard as exceeding all that our reason could suggest. He says elsewhere, "We ought to love more things than those for which we dare to hope§." Then,

* Lettres Phil. 33.
† In Cant. Cantic. c. v.
‡ In Cant. Cantic.
§ Benjamin Minor, c. lxv.

as if sending us from schools to the gardens and groves, or to take up our oars for a river voyage, in order to hear the echoes in nature of a voice less engaged or disguised than its own, he says, "What is to be believed, no doubt man can teach man, but love man cannot impart to man*." Balzac, as if similarly fond of the open air and the aspect of nature, remarks, that the prayer of the Emperor Theodosius, which enlisted in his favour against the tyrant Eugenius the winds and the hail, was a prayer which he made on horseback. Heaven only knows how many javelins or darts of that kind reach it from some boat on the river or some garden on the bank, of which archery the consequences, though secret, may be to those who practised it of equal importance. The Orientals, it must be owned, have even customs which seem expressly the result of the influence produced by an out-of-door life, with the observation of nature in suggesting the homage which men owe to their Creator. Abdel Kadir, escorted about Paris by several French generals and great personages of the court, was taken late in the day to the Hôtel de Ville. He proceeded from room to room admiring with the taste of a connoisseur the paintings and the sculpture of that sumptuous palace, till, on entering a gallery fronting the west, he perceived that the sun was setting. He stopped short, and turning to his attendants, cried out "Mats, mats!" They were not provided with them there, but he threw himself prostrate on the floor to adore God. The French great people stood aghast looking at one another with no very intelligent faces, but he rose after a few moments, and quite coolly, as if nothing had interrupted them, continued his inspection of the apartments. You see the hour for prayer was come, and the man with it. The influence of the open air and the natural, nomadic life was revived. Pictures, statues, generals, and courtiers all are as nothing before him; he falls on his face and worships. An instance somewhat similar was observed by the Duc de Saint-Simon when M. de Lauzan gave an entertainment, at Paris, to Mehemet-Effendi Tefderdar. Though the collation lasted only two hours, there was a carpet laid expressly for the moment of his prayer; "and," says the

* De Quibusdam Dubiis.

duke, "every one at their ease saw him make his prostrations with great devotion*."

In fine, it is in presence of nature, as it were, and during excursions of the kind we are concerned with, that men feel themselves most free, spiritually, from cold icy influences, and from artificial trammels that are unfavourable to the love of God. It is then that they are most keenly sensible of those great general truths respecting the divine majesty and goodness to which theologians themselves are accustomed to appeal, as when Richard of St. Victor says, "It seems to happen as if by a certain gift of nature, that all men, learned and ignorant alike, have for general rule to ascribe to God whatever qualities are best, and even what clear reason does not teach, to receive through piety without the least doubt. Hence, without being able to furnish proofs, all men alike call God immense, eternal, all-wise, and all-powerful. There is, then, to all in common a certain ideal, forming a public opinion respecting God, ascribing to Him all conceivable perfections, so that from this solid foundation of intimate truth the greatest masters begin their disputations when they purpose to investigate more minutely the divine properties†." To considerations of this kind, therefore, we owe the lines of Parnell, written as if expressly with a view to our object, in his Hymn to Contentment,—

"Oh! by yonder mossy seat,
In my hour of sweet retreat,
Might I thus my soul employ,
With sense of gratitude and joy:
Pleasing all men, hurting none,
Pleased and bless'd with God alone;
Then, while the gardens take my sight,
With all the colours of delight,
While silver waters glide along,
To please my ear and court my song,
I'll lift my voice and tune my string,
And Thee, great source of nature, sing."

Upon the whole, what is it to love nature but to love God? "Nature gives me this," you say. "But do you not perceive

* Mém. xviii. 171. † De Trinitate, lib. i. c. 20.

adds the philosopher, "that when you speak so you only change a name; since what else is nature in regard to its benefits but God, who designed them for you? Therefore, most ungrateful of mortals," he continues, "you commit an absurdity as well as a perverse offence when you say that you owe this or that to nature and not to God; for neither is there nature without God, nor God without nature. If you received a gift from Seneca, would you say that you were indebted for it to Annæus or to Lucius? That would be to change, not the condition but the name, since, whether you gave his name or his prænomen, or his cognomen, it would be still the man himself*." In like manner, when we speak of loving nature it is only another word for loving Him to whom we owe all things.

Knowledge of the common kind
Flows from the same eternal mind;
Science, wrote a deathless pen,
Is nothing but his gift to men;
And life in every degree
Proclaims Him the source of all we see.
Art itself could not arise
Without his Fiat from the skies.
Of the five causes that the schools think real,
Matter and form, efficient and ideal,
Final itself, are but expressions vain
To tell of what is needed to sustain
The whole of nature; which made Denis speak
Of Hyperarchios Archi, in classic Greek.
The term sounds vain—'tis jargon, though so old,
I see by your smiles you need not that be told;
While still it serves to fix and to convey
To minds a sense perhaps no other may.
But who upon mere effects his love can spend
And not love Him who is their cause and end?

A susceptibility for enjoyment, and even, we ventured to say, for pleasure, was another qualification required for the purpose we had in view; and if we can only pluck up our courage and overcome our dread of some people's looks, seeming, at least to us, to bespeak, perhaps, as the text says, "ignorantiam

* Sen. de Beneficiis, lib. iv. 8.

proximi," without hesitation one can reasonably affirm that this capacity may, notwithstanding its liability to abuse, conduce, in a very effectual way, to a love of God from the heart. For have not those persons especial motives to love Him, when they consider how He has provided for their pleasures, for their amusements, and for the very intervals, as it were, which we are attempting to describe? That He has done so, was acknowledged even by the ancient philosopher, remarking how many adaptations there are in creation to the natural taste of mankind for the gratification of all the senses, adding, "Neque enim, necessitatibus tantummodò nostris provisum est: usque in delicias amamur*." Pleasures themselves, with such thoughts, nourish the love of God. The old poet exclaims, "Ye Muses, with the hymns of the dance!" Weigh these words apart from their Pagan application wherein lay the perversion, and you will estimate them at a great value; they remind one of the saying of Sir Thomas Browne—"Even that tavern music which makes one man merry, another mad, in me strikes a deep fit of devotion,"—words indicative of more wisdom even than those of the celebrated Lully, who, hearing one of his opera airs with Latin words adjusted to it sung in a church, said aloud, "O my God, forgive me, but I did not compose it for Thee!" Certainly, there seems to be no reason for concluding, as some do that your garden and river hours must form an exception to the man of a Davidic spirit, who is often mistaken for some light hearted swell, when saying, "Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore, semper laus ejus in ore meo." Happiness, even lightheartedness, is eminently a religious feeling; and the sort of pleasure incident to these excursions partakes of the same character. If you doubt it, there are some who will have a right to exclaim, Shame on your soul, and fie upon your heart! But the desire of it can awaken a recollection of its only true and lasting source; for without that direction minds are apt to fall into the condition of Olindo, when, as the poet says,

"Brama assai, poco spera, e nulla chiede."

He desired much, hoped little, asked nothing. This is not

* Sen. de Beneficiis, lib. iv. 5.

joyous state of mind to be in; and this is where pleasure without the religious sense leaves us. Therefore, we are told, as Richard of St. Victor says, to remember our Creator before the daughters of song will be deaf, "et obsurdescent omnes filiæ carminis*." It is said in the Psalm, "I remembered God and was delighted;" and I once heard a certain noble preacher say upon this text from the pulpit of the Oratorians in London, that "whatever we least like to think of is foreign to God, and whatever we most like to think of is in Him." Could any thing be better expressed, more charmingly expressed, or more in accordance with the noblest instincts? "Dulcis Deus dicitur tanquam fons et causa omnis dulcedinis tam corporalis quam spiritalis," says Lessius; for, he adds, "whatever is sweet and delightful in created things, is from Him—not alone every sweet and delightful object is from Him—but also all delight, all sense of sweetness in angels, men, and animals, is from Him†." Watch those tribes of sea-birds, living together by thousands and millions along our wild romantic shores, so sportive and free, and seeming to have so many tastes in common with ourselves, the main body being congregated at some favourite locality, while excursionists, as it were, depart from time to time, some by pairs or threes, others quite alone, each for himself, hovering through the blue air of morning, solitary, or following your vessel as if wishing to be of the party, or to satisfy some whim, skimming heedless of it over the illumined wave. What an evidence of the goodness of the Creator in these happy creatures! not alone whose existence by a necessity of their condition, but whose habits, as it would seem, collective and individual, adopted by choice, must be pleasure. How the mere sight of these winged ramblers over the ocean and its rocks, can prompt the words, "oculi omnium in te sperunt, Domine, et imples omne animal benedictione!" And can we suppose it to have been the intention of God that his rational creatures alone should lead a life of dark drudgery and ceaseless warring care, contrary to their instincts,—alone should be left with no intervals of playful enjoyment or participation in the smiles and charms

* De Mundi Fine.

† Lessii Divinar. Perfect. Expositio, c. xviii.

of nature? Certainly not. Then for the enjoyments which He places within our reach, and for which our nature yearns, for each lonely ramble, for each pleasure party on the river, and for the blessings of a peaceful social state, collectively enjoyed, men are moved, as if by nature's voice, to be grateful. Of course, the common pleasures of which we speak are only adapted for our present condition; but when viewed properly in the light of truth, in accordance with common sense, they can direct us to what is better; for attend to what St. Augustin says—"When we hear," saith he, "that we shall be deprived of these things in heaven, and that God alone will be the continual subject of our felicity, the soul, accustomed to delight itself in a multiplicity of little objects, finds itself pained as in an agony. This soul, attached to the flesh, and of which the wings are glued together by its cupidities, says to itself, What enjoyment will there be to me when I shall neither eat nor drink, nor have a congenial companion, such as God gave man in Paradise? What pleasure will be left to me? It is the sickness hardly separable from our mortal state, and not the health awaiting us hereafter that makes you delight in these things as you now view them. The sick desire some things ardently; they wish for water from a certain fountain, for some kinds of apples and other fruits; and they wish for them so ardently that they think, cost what they may, they ought to have them. Health returns, and the cupidity perishes. They think no more of what they desired with an immoderate longing; for they were in a fever when they desired it. Now, as a return of health dissipates these desires of the sick, so immortality causes to cease all these cupidities; for our health consists in immortality; and so in the love of God we shall enjoy all things*." You see, then, his meaning, do you not? While in this present state of existence, which, when compared with what awaits us hereafter, may be called sickness, we have these wonted longings; and we ought to be given, in a reasonable way, what we wish for; there is no harm in such compliance. Strictly speaking, of course, they argue no sickness; for, as Butler says, "our appetites, passions, and senses, in themselves, no way

* Serm. cclv. 7.

imply disease, nor deficiency, nor imperfection of any kind, but only this, that the constitution of nature as at present, according to which God has made us, is such as to require them." But in the next life we are intended for higher things; immortality, which, as contrasted with our present state, is health, will not require them; and then, in God, we shall enjoy all that will be loved under our altered condition; so that, on the whole, these poor revels of ours are needful for the present; while, in fact, they only foster the hope of our one day meeting together in a perfected condition in heaven, where, in another way, in a way incomparably higher, as Sir Thomas More used to affirm, "we shall be merrie together for ever and ever." Moreover, gratitude is a religious feeling, and men, though they may not always say it, are grateful for the present gifts of what they long for and for serene hours. It is often during such intervals that they feel most, what some may have heard said by the same great Oratorian just alluded to, that God loves us with a romantic love,—again, a most happy and just sentence; for, truly, experience alone seems to prove that He does; and, perhaps, if all were known, it might be questioned whether those who altogether reject such intervals as savouring of the profane, have always shown themselves equally sensible of their obligation in this respect, or even the most exempt from the passions of envy, jealousy, and bitterness, which are so hostile to divine love. Besides, to hope is greatest, says Richard. These intervals, as we have just suggested, promote hope, and the final object of all hope is perfect satisfaction, and that is God. For every human feeling is greater and larger than the exciting cause—a proof, as Coleridge says, "that man is designed for a higher state of existence." No one feels that the amusements or intervals of serene hours which he has been enjoying, though protracted for ever, would be sufficient to satisfy him. They serve to fill up blank spaces, as Butler says, "and to hinder us from feeling our deficiencies, but it is not in such things that we can hope ever to find our happiness. We cannot sit down so satisfied and rest in the enjoyment of them. They do not remove our internal poverty, or satisfy our wants; at least after, if not while enjoying them, the poverty and the wants remain." It is plain, therefore, that we have a capacity for deeper and

higher pleasures, so that, in the coolest way of consideration, without either the heat of fanciful enthusiasm, or even the warmth of real devotion, nothing is more certain, after examining all things mortal in succession, than that it is the infinite Being alone who can supply all the capacities of our nature. Naturally, then, if we may say so without offending any one, the taste for enjoyment, combined with a little thought about it, without which it does not merit the name of such a taste, leads to the love of Him who is its source, even at present, and with whom alone, as Cowley says, are

> "A thousand sweets, bought with no foll'wing gall,
> Joys, not like ours short, but perpetual."

Upon the whole, then—

> Delights and joys, and even wildest fun,
> Are traced to where they all must have begun;
> The faculty of tasting brightest pleasure
> God gave, and still imparts with wisest measure.
> There's no true taste of any earthly thing
> That does not from that centre flow and spring;
> So when we like a pleasant merry day,
> And seek enjoyment every sprightly way,
> We ought, of course, to love Him all the more
> Who of such little things gives plenteous store.

Then, again, it was said that the absence of vice was essential for realizing the general object of these expeditions; and who that is not delirious may not be trusted to draw the right conclusion which is required here, which alone suffices to explain so many grave events and so many accomplished facts? "Innocentes et recti adhæserunt mihi quia sustinui Te." The innocent are ready to do any thing for the love of God. The profligate wicked, as every one knows, are not to be moved by such a motive. Curses, not blessings, flow spontaneously, irresistibly from their lips, and a highly curious physiological fact is this to observe, even when it is in one's self. They seem sometimes almost to invoke that sinister coming which, as Richard of St. Victor says, like that of Christ, was foretold,—"Venit mane et nox." "The coming of Christ," he adds, "makes day—that of Antichrist, night. O night, terrible and

full of horrors, which is caused by the presence of Antichrist! Our day," he adds, as if not much relishing by anticipation certain views of progress which were to be adopted later, "our day is justice, not injustice; wisdom, not ignorance; faith, not doubt and despair*."

Badness of heart and manners we despise,
But in that deep contempt a secret lies;
For hatred here involves a love divine,
Of what opposing it must ever shine.
Oh, what a charm existing in the good,
That which excludes whate'er is understood
By base and treacherous and selfish ill,
With which such scorn human bosoms fill!
Well, then, let hatred change to love intense,
To love without measure, passing all that sense
Can feel, appreciate, adore, admire;
Till sense, and mind, and deepest passion tire.
And then to find its object and its cause,
Love Him from whom each mortal ever draws
The sweet congenial graces of the mind,
Which make him just and good, sincere and kind.
Mysterious source! whose origin defies
The sharpest scrutiny of schoolmen's eyes:
Eternal, independent in its might,
Yet suffering law to constitute the right.
Goodness of God! exciting love in all,
Even in those through frailty who fall.
Loved when its rays descend upon our side,
But loved even more when absent and defied.

The absence of worldliness was also, with all the selfishness and pride involved in that disposition, deemed essential, that is, the absence, as we have heard say, of what constituted the sin of the rebel angels, the not seeking to get rid of God and to be left to one's self, which is, of all conceivable things, the most destructive of the love of God. Indeed, any of us can perceive that it must be so. A nation cannot have internal peace when there is no acknowledged king or government, or only one that is detested, and every moment treated with trickery in hopes of

* De Verbo Incarnato, 14.

deceiving it; a household will not be distinguished for its affectionate and felicitous temper where no one has authority, and every one desires to be let alone to act in all manner of ways, just as he chooses, without any reverence or love for those who should direct or govern; the mind cannot have serene hours when God, its natural sovereign, its paternal guide, its eternal lover, is either unknown or dreaded, and shunned through the consciousness of a conspirator, and of a false heart, as an offended power. Besides, men are disposed to love what pleases, what satisfies; and worldliness, by their own confession, neither pleases nor satisfies; whereas the contrary affection achieves both objects. "It was doubtless intended," as Butler says, "that life should be very much a pursuit to the gross of mankind. But this is carried so much further than is reasonable that what gives immediate satisfaction, i.e. our present interest, is scarce considered as our interest all. It is inventions which have only a remote tendency towards enjoyment perhaps, but a remote tendency towards gaining the means only of enjoyment, which are chiefly spoken of as useful to the world." But naturally, even in this world we seek a happiness that does not consist merely in tendencies and make-shifts. We desire that our affections should have their adequate objects; and as the absence of worldliness implies this desire, it is in some sense coincident with the love of God, who is that adequate and ultimate object.

Therefore, the poet Malherbe, paraphrasing a psalm, exclaims,

> "N'espérons plus, mon âme, aux promesses du monde;
> Sa lumière est un verre, et sa faveur une onde
> Que toujours quelque vent empêche de calmer.
> Quittons ces vanités, lassons-nous de les suivre:
> C'est Dieu qui nous fait vivre,
> C'est Dieu qu'il faut aimer!"

The fact is, when you have ceased to be worldly, and the high fever of that inhuman disposition has left you, there comes what might be termed a weakness for natural, airy, and romantic pleasures; you find tears in your eyes at the sight of a flower, and at the sound of a song; you feel a sort of longing even for losing yourself in the beautiful and good, to which so many of those who in subservience to it were beautiful and good, so

many whom you have known and loved with all but an infinite love on earth, are already passed out of your sight. By an easy, and one might say almost natural process, you pass on to such a love of what is divine, that you admit, quite readily, the good of passing, though it be by death, to that Being who made the absolute beautiful, the harmonious, and the good, which you feel that you are unable in this life, like those who once were with you, sufficiently to love, or sufficiently to admire. Therefore, on the whole,

> They who despise the world's thoughtless reign,
> Who of its pride and cruelty complain,
> Who never on its promises relied,
> Yielding to hopes that time itself defied;
> Who know all its changes and its empty boast,
> Its proffer'd help, which fails when wanted most,
> Will love the Monitor who mocks its sway,
> Substituting what can never pass away.
> He who loves freedom, sweet and social ease,
> Who hates the trammels that must youth displease,
> Who loves the guileless in a girl or boy,
> Who finds in such innocence his purest joy,
> When heart and mind with indignation burn,
> To God eternal will his nature turn.
> To love the natural, and its opponent flee,
> Is to love God and his adorer be.

Then, again, the love of one another was required. And when we love others most people must have heard that it is a great step in advance; in fact, as one might say to young people, it is like one of their own "giant's strides" towards even the perfect love of God. No doubt, as Madame Swetchine remarked to the Princess Wittgenstein, "there are a thousand secret affinities between truth and a harmless affection;" just as the latter has no great security without some portion at least of the former breaking in. Therefore the defence of religion properly understood, has been always considered identical with the defence of humanity, not as an abstraction, after the manner of a sophist, but as a tangible aggregate made up of men and women, of parents and children, sons and daughters, just as if it was all about espousing the cause of Harry in the next street, or Alice

in the garret; for without such love, as an old writer says, "it is impossible to acquire a God-like disposition, or to be approved by our Creator, which blessed temper must be cultivated and improved here in order to have our happiness advanced in the ages of eternity. You love people generally, and, of course, you love your friend; then since thou canst talk of love so well, thy company is well met, and we'll employ thee too, promising for recompence thine own gladness that thou art employed; for say then to thy company that they must love 'Il sempiterno Amante'—the eternal Lover, as Ariosto qualifies our Lord,—who loves them, and who is so good to them, giving them his light, his life, his own image, his own tastes, his own enjoyments, or his mysterious aid and his ineffable consolation." The love of what is human seems, of course, to belong to the natural state; but, let us remark, that there may be no such great matter to correct, even in this order of affections, viewed as such; though I am aware that some great philosophers and moralists, as Petrarch for instance, are of a different opinion; for the latter represents, in one of his dialogues, St. Augustin arguing against him, and reproving him for having inverted it. But this seems to be exacting more from us than God requires; for this is to be not content with what God has Himself laid down, when the inspired page pronounces it to be impossible to love the invisible Creator when we have not begun by loving the creatures whom we have seen. Yet they call this exact and divine process an inverted order, and stigmatize it as such! Then, again, when we really love his workmanship in any form, we cannot but love Him for his care of it, and his tenderness for it. His mercies are over all his works; yes, even when your eyes cannot trace them or follow them, there they are still. "Than his mercies," adds Richard, "nothing is more wonderful*." St. Chrysostom says, that all the sins of the world, plunged into the mercy of God, are but a drop in the ocean. "With all his omnipotence, He is still," as St. Leo says, "the clement God, whose nature is goodness, whose will is power, and whose work is mercy." With such knowledge, which in some degree all possess, unless it be

* De Spiritu Blasphemiæ.

some violent theologians ascribing to God "infinite severity," we cannot therefore wholly separate, even in imagination, the people that we love from the God whose favour is to be propitiated by that very love; and every act, or word, or thought which argues a good will towards them, subjects us more or less to the influence of those combined passions so nobly invoked by Louis the Germanic, in the celebrated formula, which begins with the words that are sufficient to attach us even to former generations for having felt and cultivated them, namely, "Pro Deo amur et pro Xristian poblo et nostro commun salvament." Moreover, when we look sharply into things as they exist around us, it is hardly possible to escape from yielding to the evidence of the divine goodness which is evinced towards all men. "We do not sufficiently consider," Madame Swetchine used to say, "that true goods, as youth, strength, virtue, talent, and health, are gifts generally, and excepting where their absence, for reasons unknown to us, may be necessary to the ultimate happiness of those now wanting them, imparted to all the world, in regard to which there are no privileged classes*." But all observations of this nature, which necessarily accompany a fellow feeling for every one, has a tendency to awaken and confirm a grateful sense of the divine goodness; therefore are we again directed to the logical justice of our general proposition. Without even appealing to daily experience, the ancient charters attest historically that this love of mankind produced, often in the times when they were written, what might be termed its natural result. For instance, a knight named Thibault, "vir armis militaribus deditus," giving land to the Abbey of Marmoutier, says in the beginning of his charter, "quanta et quam benignissima circa humanum genus Dei existit pietas, nullus mortalium vel corde cogitare vel verbo dicere potest: invitat enim nos ut post multa perpetrata scelera ad eum redeamus, pie et misericorditer dicendo, Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos," and he concludes, begging their prayers, that in death "the 'pestifer inimicus' may not have joy of his soul, but that it may be received 'ad gaudia florentis paradisi†.'" Who can love the poor, the commonalty,

* Pensées.

† Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes, IV. Série, tom. iv.

and not, when one comes to think of it, love Him who so made Himself poor and of low degree for their sake, that He allows men to speak of Him in the simple style of these charters, as where this same knight Thibault says of St. Martin, "qui Deum et Dominum nostrum clamidis una parte vestivit in paupere?" Take away that intervention by our common Maker, and, with an exception in favour of a few young people of a romantic turn, if you fancy their case requires it, which it may not do for all your fancies, you have verified the lines of Shakspeare,

> "For misery is trodden on by many,
> And being low, never relieved by any."

You will, in that event, have no great cause for wonder if you meet even with philanthropists like Voltaire, loving humanity, and affecting on every occasion, as Rousseau said, to despise the poor. Besides, without having ever loved in a common way our fellow-creature, how can any one pretend to love God? Love is a habit, an art like any other. It must be cultivated. We must learn its elements. We must have practice. If you cannot draw the human figure, who would ask you to copy the transfiguration? If you are unable to play a simple air, familiar to the street, is it to be thought that you can execute an overture of Rossini or a gloria of Mozart's? and pray observe, as our masters give us to understand, if you are to love God you must love Him just in the same way, the same silly way according to grave people, as you would love your friend at whose feet you may be sitting and frolicking; since, as Lacordaire says, "affections, whatever be their object, low or elevated, earthly or supernatural, do not change their essence; we do not love God otherwise than we love man; and the tenderness of the saints, all divine as it is, is nothing else in its nature but human tenderness*." "As we cannot remove from this earth," says Butler, "or change our general business on it, so neither can we alter our real nature. Religion does not demand new affections, but only claims the direction of those you already have, which you daily feel, though confined to objects not unsuitable but altogether unequal to them. It only represents to you the higher, the adequate objects of these very faculties and affec-

* Lettres à un jeune Homme.

tions." "Look," says Balzac, glancing at one instance, "look at St. John, in the picture of the last supper. See how carelessly he rests his young head in a place at which seraphims gaze with reverence." See, again, with what simplicity, with what natural human feeling, those who love Him refer to all passages of his life, as in the Breton song of the fishermen in rough weather,—

"Le bon Jésus marchait sur l'eau ;
Va, sans peur, mon petit bateau !"

But we may go further still, and, following our said masters, venture to affirm that even love, in the common human acceptation of the term, has actually no other ultimate bourn but this sentiment—so heavenly and divine. Indeed, it is evident that of all human passions love is the most likely to send us to the Eternal. For love, as we all know, regards only love. The whole world is nothing in comparison. Every thing is vile and unworthy even of man's nature that does not minister to it. But then the immediate object of love that is before our eyes at the best is perishable. Let only a few years pass away, and either that object or we ourselves must be removed. Irresistibly, nevertheless, we desire that our love should have no end; we even feel that it is something which in itself ought to be endless. This beauty, we say to our heart, must somewhere or other last; we reject with disgust the thought of its annihilation. This union, we say, must last; we cannot conceive how in the depths even of our own nature it ever could be dissolved; this ecstasy must last, for we feel that it must belong, in some form or other, to what is eternal. So, insensibly almost, we centre as it were our thoughts in God, and in Him we seek to love and to be loved. In fact, if, in cases otherwise without hope, fires more ardent than those of friendship should be kindled in the heart, it feels itself somehow naturally directed to another life, as the flame which flies towards the sky when it has no more aliment on the ground.

"Love is the supreme act of the soul," says Lacordaire, "and the masterpiece of man. No word in any language comes after it. Once uttered, our only resource is to repeat the name for ever. Well then, questionless, under this inspiration we feel that this is what we owe to God, adhering to Him with a force as invincible as it is ardent."

All that in men we praise and love
Was given to them by God above,—
Heroic, faithful, simple, good,
Of sweetness, graces, every mood,
When men are such, and wish'd to be,
'Tis their Creator you should see.
Besides, He is love itself, and all its joys
He gave us, and for good employs.
And so when Saint Bernard light imparts,
He calls him "sweetness of our hearts."
But mark now in a common way
How this is witness'd every day.
For women so holy and so fair,
Women so charming everywhere;
Women, with love their hearts so moved,
As daily can be seen and proved,
Whose sprightliness can often cheer
When wisdom fails to dry a tear,
Were gifts that God reserved for best
When He had granted all the rest.
When we see them soothe some grief,
For every sorrow find relief.
See them high or see them low,
Anxious ever to bestow
A balm for hearts, for minds, for pain,
All frailty anxious to sustain;
Duties lasting like the sun,
Ending still, and still begun,—
When we see them walk or dance,
Do all with grace that can entrance,
What madness not to think of Him
Who wish'd to fill up to the brim
The cup of joy for mortals meant
When into this world sent!
While living, best for every mood,
Man's refuge from dull solitude,—
A guide, a monitor, a rest,
Of all created things the best.
When happy, saying by their eyes,
Let love transport us to the skies;
And when we see them pass away,
"Love God" appearing still to say.

Then view it too on every side,
How vast and fruitful, deep and wide
Is this pure, bright, and happy theme
Divine, like a celestial dream!
For how can men esteem each other,
Loving each as though a brother,
Unless they also raise their thoughts
To Him who every grace imparts?
The love of man then has no end
Till to our God our hearts we send.
A wing is such love to soar away
To Love divine in endless day.

Again, please to observe, without minding who in this instance says it, that the love of common things which entered into the list of qualifications requisite for serene hours, conduces similarly to the love of God, who made and gave them all; and it is not playing upon words to say this, for it is only expressing exactly a certain truth. Not to insist upon the likeness which this taste imparts to a prominent disposition of those who most eminently loved God, as in the instance of St. Philip Neri, who, along with so many others of the saints, shunned all singularity, and sought to be externally like all the world, it seems but a fair inference to say, that if you love what is common, supposing of course always that you can be thoughtful, without which capacity you are self-excluded from all such pleasures as we are concerned with, you will be inclined to love the Giver of what constantly surrounds you as so much vital air. It is seldom that what He has given, and is known to have given, passes for extraordinary; and those who set their affections, such as they are, on the latter, are, in most instances, directed by a mere inordinate, and often stupid love of themselves, as being, unlike other men, either its makers, or possessors, or scientific admirers. But one's religious thankfulness is not to be supposed abating like Robinson Crusoe's upon discovering, as in the instance of the growing up of the corn, that what we value is nothing but what is common. On the contrary, we must believe that according to the simple dictate of reason, it will, under the influence of a joyously serene hour, be as much felt for so general a providence as if it had been what men call miraculous. "Let

not the blessings we receive daily from God," says that great lover of rivers, Izaak Walton, "make us not to value or not praise Him because they be common. How many men forget to praise Him for them because they be so common! But let not us forget to do so; because it is a sacrifice so pleasing to Him that made that sun and us, and still protects us and gives us flowers and showers, and the morning breeze, and the evening sweetness, and stomachs, and meat, and content, and leisure to go a-fishing."

> The common—oh, what peace in all such things!
> Though often scorned by the apes of kings.
> He who can feel their beauty and their charm
> Of most delusions will escape the harm.
> But all that is familiar in their joy
> To love its Maker will its strength employ.
> In every common thing we love and prize,
> It is from Him the charm must arise.
> All that we see, and use, and like each day,
> From his command and order has its stay;
> Therefore to love Him must they feel inclined
> When they obey the dictate of their mind.

In like manner, again, one can so easily perceive that it is needless to enter on any detailed development of the thought how justice, toleration, and loyalty must conduce to the love of Him who is the just κατ' ἐξοχήν,—who, every day, sets before us the example of toleration, making his sun to shine alike on all, bearing so long and patiently with our waywardness, and wantonness, and foolishness,—and who has ordained governments with all their divers and mysterious aids, involving respect for them, and obedience to them, which, after all, are the result of his mysterious fiat, as an element of the general happiness and liberty of mankind. Moreover, the love of justice leads, in a most direct and human way, to the love of God, by a consideration that it was only through the old and the new law, through Moses and Jesus Christ, that men were delivered from what Lacordaire distinguishes as the triple inhumanity of the ancient legislations, which contained neither rights in principle, rights immutable, nor rights universal; the weak every where

having no protection against the strong, the minority being at the mercy of the majority, and man being over the whole globe the enemy of man. "What," he asks, "did our Saviour do with this miserable condition of our race which would freeze us with horror if only one day of its existence could return to be witnessed by ourselves? He founded by its side a pure and equitable society, and left the ancient state of things to the opprobrium of a comparison with it. He gave to mankind what the most famous of human legislators had never conferred,—rights in principle,—rights immutable,—rights universal. And besides, in so doing He made these rights identical with virtues; for He gave them not in the direct form of rights, but under that of duties; so the Gospel, instead of being a declaration of the rights of man, is a declaration of his duties, leaving us the formula of all Christian civilization that there are no rights, and no law against duty." Then in respect to toleration, the promulgation of charity, which is its best source and safeguard, calls upon every heart to love the divine Founder of the evangelical law,—while, in fine, the mere love of order and of peaceful days under an efficient government, without tyranny or absolutism, directs us to the same love of Him who is its Author. In our times especially, revolutions being doctrinal, as Lacordaire remarks, and being able to finish only by a doctrine,—and the only doctrine which possesses the authority to command and the charity to persuade being the Christian doctrine, we are referred immediately to the personal God as our great social benefactor, to whom we owe all temporal security and peace within the confines of our country itself. However, with respect to the duty and consequences of acquiescence, be it remembered, when requiring loyalty, that we spoke of an obedience which honoured him who exercised as well as him who received it; we were supposing the submission that is evinced for the crowned Christian, or, at least, for the government of a free and noble people, which only demands what is due to Cæsar, —which respects the customs, the manners, the faith, the wishes, and even the thoughts of its subjects. But the sovereign of the Tudor or Imperial type, or the political power, however constituted, that resolves to act and think for every one, and that sets

at nought human freedom, while apparelling them all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers and worship Him their Lord,—so far from being the object of a loyalty which nourishes the love of God, who is liberty and justice, deserves only to hear the indignant protest of Agamemnon,—

> Ἀλλ' ὅδ' ἀνὴρ ἐθέλει περὶ πάντων ἔμμεναι ἄλλων,
> πάντων μὲν κρατέειν ἐθέλει, πάντεσσι δ' ἀνάσσειν,
> πᾶσι δὲ σημαίνειν, ἅ τιν' οὐ πείσεσθαι ὀΐω *.

Upon the whole these three virtues lead to the same end, and so

> In Celtic legends Kadock used to say,
> Love justice without God no mortal may †.
> Tolerance, order, equity, are things
> That sometimes fail when all their stays are kings;
> But he who loves truly that which they infuse,
> He who extols them, and, what's more, will use,
> Must love that God who wills them to be shown
> By all who His majesty and power own.

The love of mind, again, leads, so to speak, naturally to the same issue, which they who do not think, it is difficult to know what mind they can have, or what in them is like to the nature of man; for, as the poet exclaims,—

> "Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
> Their only point of rest, Eternal Word!"

We remarked on the occasion when this was considered, that what is most precious and valued belongs to the invisible world. Well, in the Credo which we all sing, is not God entitled the Creator of all things visible and invisible? Does not justice itself, as Augustin Cochin points out, justice against which all that is visible seems often leagued in close confederacy, appertain to the invisible world? There is the invisible par excellence, and who can sever in imagination the idea of justice from that of God? Does not certainty too depend upon mind, and does not the love of certainty send you to Him against whom

* i. 287.

† Hersart de la Villemarqué, La Légende Celt.

doubt conspires? St. Augustine, therefore, explaining the felicity of heaven, shows how that love of truth and that admiration for what is seen in God, which are inseparable from a just estimate of what an acquiescence in the supremacy of mind involves, will constitute the occupation of the supremely serene, that is, of the blessed. "All our action in heaven," he says, "will be saying, 'Amen!' and 'Alleluja for ever!' that is, in the highest exercise of mind. But here," he continues, "do not give way to the sadness of a carnal sentiment, fancying some one motionless repeating every day this 'Amen!' this 'Alleluja!' and perishing with weariness, falling asleep at this ditty, and longing to be silent, so that life itself becomes to him an object of contempt and disgust. Do not say, 'What! repeat for ever "Amen!" and "Alleluja!" how can you endure the thought of it?' Learn that we shall say it, not with sounds that pass, but with an affectionate aspiration of the soul, 'Amen!' or, 'Behold truth!' 'Alleluja!' or, 'Praise God!' Now when we shall have this vision, it will be a love, not in this life conceivable, that we shall experience, while saying 'Behold truth!' and it will be with an insatiable overflow of words which can never weary that we shall repeat, 'Praise be to God*!'" Even in this world it is not mind which grows weary in repeating such an 'Amen' and such an 'Alleluja.' It is the attention which fails, and it fails through the weakness of the mind's present companion, the flesh. Even in this world we feel through an acquiescence in the due supremacy of mind, that if the mere effects of wisdom which we now discern present the noblest object to a creature as here existing, the quality itself must be a far higher object of contemplation to a creature perfected and capable of viewing the scheme of the universe in that mind which projected it; therefore the divine nature itself can be recognized as the ultimate object of a creature's love when moved intellectually by the love of mind, of truth, and of perfection. The exercise of mind cannot indeed of itself produce different results on earth from what it does in heaven; therefore this exercise, with a recognition of its legitimate dominion over all that is material, must in this life also conduce to the love of

* Serm. ccclii. 28.

God. Besides, if we love mind we must love its most distinctive privilege. Now other animals seem to partake of some of its capacities, but not of all. Try to imagine a dog, the best representative perhaps of the whole class, try to imagine it, I say, evincing love for its Creator, and you will perceive in an instant the immeasurable gulf that separates man from all other creatures on the earth. Loving mind, we must then love not alone God, but the love itself which binds us to Him, and which constitutes the noblest attribute of our nature.

> Intelligence when foster'd and supreme
> Will never trust to a deceitful dream,
> Or think that mind, however vast its sway,
> Could emanate in any but the way
> Which wise men tell us when they will unfold
> The deep and awful mysteries of old.
> He is the source of all that yields a light
> To mortals living in this vale of night.
> So that to love mind as our nature can
> Is to love God, the light and end of man.

The same consequence follows from the next qualification that was spoken of, which consisted in humbleness of mind with regard to all questions of philosophy, and consequently of religion. He was not, I suppose, a lover of God, over-given to religious considerations, and prone to thraldom, who first proposed to man to be like God in knowledge. It is an awkward example to refer to in some quarters, but we can't help remembering it. "Believe me, my dear friend," writes the Count de Maistre, "between man and God there is nothing but pride. Remove that cursed cataract, and light and love will enter." "In the seventeenth century," says Cousin, "the greater that a man knew himself to be, the littler did he feel himself before God; and the strongest minds were the most humble*." The common sort of thing we call humility replaces man so far in his original state of relation to God, which involved, as we all know, filial love; leading him to say with Rivarol, "Like the universe itself I need God to save me from chaos and the anarchy of my own ideas. For it is He who delivers our mind

* Madame de Sablé, 56.

from its long torments, and our heart from its vast solitude;" or, better still, with one who felt the impossibility of scanning the eternal.—How I should wish to fathom these depths! But patience! Let us go to the end; the end is not far off; and then,—rest, joy, the eternal vision of all good, 'facie ad faciem.'"

Oh, how the heart exults, in fancy free,
When deaf to all sounds from vain philosophy!
It feels that our God is great, and wise, and good,
However far from being understood.
Men feel a love that does their mind inspire,
For Him who wills they bow down and admire.
In glory living, as the schoolmen say,
Admiring wonder constitutes the day
That never ends for those eternal blest,
Who in that wonder find their primal rest.
Their eyes are blind Infinity to scan;
Then to know thus must be the part of man.
"Father" is the word we're taught to say
When to the Great First Cause we wish to pray;
The French, however stately and austere,
For God have only epithets most dear,
Easy, familiar, childlike, simply true,
As when what's loved and homely is in view;
As if they thought their hearts and minds to raise
By giving Him such human, simple praise.
"The good God," as they say, "the honest boy,"
Is still the term that wisest men employ.
You'd say they think the slang of youth were best
When His perfections are to be exprest,
That vain is all hope Infinity to reach
By the dull terms of inflated speech.
And so will all men that are truly wise
The pride of vain philosophy despise.
So will they turn, to love with all their hearts
Him who that sweet humility imparts;
Loving, adoring, with constancy the more
As they their own serenity implore.

Then again, almost instinctively, it will be perceived that the absence of proud pedantry and of that spirit of false, impatient criticism allied to it, must be attended with similar results; for

nothing is more opposed, in an insidious way, to the noblest, highest love that man can feel, than the rigid formality and pretension, combined with littleness of mind, of the former, or than the hardness and self-assurance of the latter. Balzac, discerning this consequence, showed that he set but little value on what could produce it; for after a long critical discourse, he breaks off suddenly, saying, "But it is late; ten o'clock strikes. Let us leave an examination so little important, to think of that of our conscience. What we are about to observe in the chapel is worth more than what we have been doing in the study."

A hatred then of pedants and their criticism
Evolves a ray from our peculiar prism;
For all is hollow in that sullen voice
Which bids us analyze and ne'er rejoice.
Dissection that permits you not to see
The whole in its harmonious unity,
May in some cases singular prove good,
But never for the mind its daily food *.
Fairly to judge and properly to speak
Requires not even Latin, Hebrew, Greek,
Nor any wisdom which is here denied
To hearts that love opens, destitute of pride.
Then to whom honest plainness thus is given,
The love of God imparts a present heaven.
They love the good, they see all beauties clear;
The rest they leave, and no result will fear.
Dauntless and gentle, sprightly, ever free,
They find that to have is better than to see.
Impress'd with knowledge that they know in part,
Such belief informs and contents their heart,
Hating the formal so, and over-wise,
To love divine a motive fresh supplies.

We have come down thus to what was required respecting the absence of false and the possession of true religious sentiments, between both of which mental conditions and divine love, no one who thinks at all can be at any great loss to discern the affinity; for in the absence of false views, people learn not to see

* Let the reader make himself familiar with the wise and charming works of Charles Nodier.

as bad in life what is really good; above all, not to see God as a tyrant, instead of seeing Him as a father; consequently, not to feel a temptation to hate Him, but, on the contrary, to feel anxious that all our sentiments should gravitate towards Him under the form of filial love,—obedient to that last precept of the spiritual art which St. Benedict lays down, "De Dei misericordia nunquam desperare*;"—we shall feel convinced that God is not what human ignorance, when combined with spiritual and intellectual pride, so often represents Him to be; that schemes of mercy, which some in their arrogance deem unphilosophical and inadequate, are divine, and that more actually existing in the universal order of things is well than they supposed. They learn that there are many forms of divine realities, that God finds means, both by sacramental and direct providential intervention, for doing things unthought of by themselves; and that those whom He loves He in some mysterious way or other saves. What are these results but fresh motives for every one to love Him? It would be long to suggest details; take only one instance. Mark the absence of the Pharisee, who presents one form of false views, in Balzac, where he says with such candour, "Even the prayer of thought is to me as great a tax as if I had to make the journey of Montserrat or of Loretto. I am always sad, but never penitent;" adding the words formerly cited, and which ought perhaps to have been chosen as a motto for a certain book, only that it would have looked like obtruding what is irrelevant: "Je suis du party des gens de bien, mais je suis du nombre des meschants." Do you think he loved God less for laying himself thus open to attacks and suspicions, and for writing in this careless way, expressing his humility as if he were with us on the river? It is he who adds what your formalists will hardly utter, "I can never believe that the divine mercy will fail our misery!" The truth is, that while time and circumstances, as Lacordaire says, trouble our dearest friendships, the love of God is actually nourished by our misfortunes and our weaknesses, and by the very faults which would have interrupted if not dissolved them. Then would you learn the effects in this respect resulting from the possession of

* Regula, cap. iv.

true religious sentiments? For this you should rather put your hands before your face and recall the lessons of your childhood. But to suggest only one inference, just mark the pre-eminence ascribed by true knowledge within this sphere to the guilt of impiety; for "all agree in this," says Richard of St. Victor, "that alone impenitence makes sins insoluble. Some sins belong to the private corruption of men, as drunkenness; others to the injury of men, as theft; some to the divine contumely, as blasphemy. Who does not know that this last is worst of all, where the blasphemer is delighted with reproaching God, and glories in it, hating both Christ and his Father? There are some evils," he continues, "which have place only in this life, as sins of pleasure; but some are both in this life and the next; for he who departs from this life with a hatred of God, which must be always voluntary, and even the result of a spiritual effort, will labour under the same disease for ever; and he who hates for ever will sin for ever, and deserve what he himself has willed by a mystery unfathomable, namely, the absence of God for ever*." The sin, therefore, to which people are least exposed, that which they commit only through a wanton, studied, inhuman acquiescence in what yields no pleasure but that of pure, execrable, disembodied, and passionless malice, is thus singled out as the only one beyond the pale of forgiveness; and, giddy as we all are, must not this consideration alone, involved in the knowledge of truth, move those who are conscious of their faults to love its author?

But of course the true religious principles constituting Christianity, which, for all that some pretend, has ever been the same, yield also positive testimony to this influence as belonging to them, from which, in fact, they cannot be separated without losing their essential nature and their very name. After all, whatever you may think of people, that which pleases them best is what is in accordance, in some way or other, with truth and with what God wills. "Quoniam misericordia tua ante oculos meos est et complacui in veritate tua." "I am pleased," adds Richard, after citing these words, and speaking just as any one of the people might speak when looking at a

* De Spiritu Blasphemiæ.

flower or hearing a symphony, or listening to the details of a noble and generous action,—"I am pleased with thy truth, felt, revealed, expressed, or embodied before me. I am pleased, not with my virtue,—which, supposing even that it exists in any degree, I never think of,—with my philosophy, my choice of opinions, my whims, but with thy truth, from which all good, all beauty, all sweetness flows; not with my sanctity, but with thy truth; not with my self-respect and adulation, but with thy truth. Thy truth hath taught me that what I have of good is thy good, and that my evils are my perversities. I am pleased with thy truth, which teacheth me to ascribe my evils to myself, and my good to thee*." Truth in theology implies goodness. Now goodness, as Lacordaire says, renders intimate and personal to us the things which have infinity for orbit and eternity for seat. It gives truth to our intelligence, justice to our will, virtue to our heart, and consequently the same mode of thinking, of willing, and of feeling that God Himself possesses, who is by his essence truth, justice, and goodness. Man does not apprehend a truth which is not in God as his thought, as his essence,—nothing being in God in the state of accident. Truth in theology causes us by an act of free will to will all the justice which God wills, and to love all the good which He loves; consequently to love Himself, who is the centre of all.

Truth can never be possest
Unless in God you find your rest;
For to know truth and not love it
Belongs not to the human spirit;
But God is truth. Then must we love
In some degree like those above.
Truths of religion once they're known
Must lead you where true love is sown;
And so th' objective truth of things
To loving souls gives light and wings
To mount to Him where angels soar,
And error's voice is heard no more.

We are nearly at the end of our summary; there remains moderation; and without the spirit which dictates that temper,

* Adnot. in Ps. xxv.

one sees only causes for dislike and distrust in regard to the author of nature, whose presence must always be associated with the idea of a check and hindrance to pleasurable acts, since He has made all things in weight and measure, and ordained laws of proportion, and consequently limits to every thing, passing beyond which, to the discomfiture and confusion of those who want it, good itself becomes evil.

> Excess thus, let the cause be what it will,
> Destroys all true peace, and turns good to ill.
> Measure and weight in what is true and best
> Perfects, ennobles, and preserves the rest.
> Immoderate zeal, although with truth combined,
> Clouds the serene and darkens all the mind.
> But whither leads calm which moderates with peace,
> Unless to the love in which all evils cease?
> Oh! we must love that centre firm and sure
> Whence nothing radiates but goodness pure.
> How quiet, still, how opposite to hate,
> To all that troubles man's perplex'd debate,
> Is the great Being who condemns the pride
> That loves the happy medium to deride!
> If its sweet paths with truth men ever trod,
> Needs must they raise their hearts to love their God.

The last was resignation; and into what does this spirit pass at length of logical necessity, but into the supreme and all-absorbing love of God, who, in a manner inconceivable to us, is to restore all things? "Quare tristis es, anima mea, et quare conturbas me?" demands the priest every morning at the commencement of the holy mass; to whom it is answered, "Spera in Deo." Yes; the great God, the personal God, is the only true consoler for the miserable; though the valid consolation emanating from Him comes to us at times in a way that we neither foresee nor understand; so that, as the poet says,—

> "Faith alone can interpret life, and the heart that aches and bleeds with the stigma
> Of pain, alone bears the likeness of Christ, and can comprehend its dark enigma."

Come, come, in wooing sorrow let's be brief. What do men

owe to the sickness of those they love, one cause why resignation is prescribed? Gratitude to God on their recovery, or else holy though struggling resignation to Him in whose love all things are found and restored; for I will not suppose any one resting in the desolating conclusion of a celebrated French critic, who, in allusion to the premature death of the young and virtuous, exclaims, "Irony of fate! vanity of moderation itself, and of wisdom!" "The God of Christians," said Madame Swetchine, whose treatise on resignation disarmed Sainte-Beuve in criticizing her works, "is the God of metamorphoses. You cast into his bosom grief, you draw from it peace. You throw into it despair; it is hope that swims to you at the top. The guilty one who flies to Him is changed into a saint, who has but one voice left to him, that of thanksgiving." The spirit of resignation, then, on the whole, causes the particular will to be lost and dissolved into the general and higher will; causes the mind to love that will as our end, as being itself most just, and right, and good, and imparts to the most impassioned an affection and loyalty to the Governor of the universe, which will prevail over all private, indirect desires of our own, enabling them to "acquaint themselves thus with God and be at peace." But friends —perhaps some one says, to recur to what was formerly suggested, and dwell upon it a little—can help you when occasion for resignation comes; and so the consequence here supposed does not seem so inevitable. Friends can satisfy you! So said that destructive sect of the philosophers in the last century, who, by the way, had no friends long. One might grow warm on this point; but of what use, as a French critic remarks, to become indignant at their sarcasms, their laughter, and their profanations? Behold them with pity rather, in their sterility, and folly, restless, impatient, and miserable, not knowing where to place their affections and their convictions, and through failing in submission to truth and duty, vainly seeking peace and happiness in their ephemeral alliances; for their enemies to-day were their friends yesterday*." But friends can suffice, say even some ordinary followers of the mere world's camp. Indeed! I should like to know what the best can do

* Pontmartin, Causeries du Samedi.

for wounds of the heart. True, there is a certain divine mission in that respect that some men undertake. St. Benedict, for instance, among his "instruments of good works" specifies as being one of them—"Dolentem consolari*;" and this very art consists in reminding those who suffer of the debts of gratitude which they still have to discharge towards Him who suffered on the cross for their sakes more than all their own beloved and lamented ones could ever have endured. But as for friends, in the ordinary sense, and their manner of comforting, speaking of perhaps "a happy release," and bidding you not to talk much about those that are gone, and to be firm, and to confine your thoughts to what is left to you; all this produces only fresh irritation to aggravate the bitterness of your heart. No; when a man suffers from the death of some one he loves,—and feels left but a very prey to time, having no more but thought of what he was to grieve the more being what he is, St. Peter's question is his spontaneous demand. To whom but to God, where else but to love God can he go? He is then almost literally driven in this direction. For think an instant. You have lost those dearest to you, let us suppose. Well, after the first paroxysm of grief you imagine that the sympathy of others will relieve you, or rather, without thinking about relieving yourself, you instinctively turn that way. So you get your friends, one by one, at intervals, to come to you. You tell them all, or half about it, giving sorrow, perhaps not unwisely, words; for

"——— the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break."

Well, they look dismal, sigh a little, as if from wanting words at first; then they utter readily some wise reflections, seeming perhaps, though we need not say it, all the while, if not inwardly laughing at you, or condemning you, an eventuality by no means impossible, at least, thinking about something else rather different from what absorbs you. Besides, the number is not small of men who resemble M. de Talleyrand in this one respect, that they appear sometimes to be of a too great resignation in regard to the misfortune of their friends, their ingenious

* Reg. cap. iv.

minds furnishing them, as Villemaine remarks, with a thousand reasons why others should have patience; as when that calm diplomatist said, "Narbonne has always been chivalrous; he has nothing, he wishes nothing, he wants nothing, and there is an end of it! What is the use of being troubled about one who is not troubled about himself*?" It is precisely thus that many will reason on occasions of this kind. But they are, in general, outwardly at least, courteous, full of what seems consideration; they listen to you till you are silent; for after all you cannot talk for ever; and then? Why then you feel a sort of collapse, a disappointment; you seem to sink lower than ever; then you are rather, if possible, more down-hearted than before; you have only to shake hands and wish adieu to your visitors, whose words fell on your heart

"——— as in winter the snow-flakes
Fall into some lone nest from which the birds have departed."

And yet, to be fair and just, what could these poor friends do for you more than they have done? Perhaps seeing you through the medium of their own dispositions, which may not be like yours, they may have thought you too fond, too much wanting in wisdom, in prudence, in acquiescence with their own views, and even with what is enjoined, too little rational, or, in brief, too impassioned; perhaps they may have thought it an act of friendship to signify as much to you by their countenance or their words. Where nothing of this could be inferred or imagined, probably they did their best to reconcile you to the thoughts of your bereavement, whatever it might be; at all events, you have said your say; they have said, or looked, theirs. Homeric, if you will,

Χαῖρε, πάτερ, ὦ ξεῖνε· γένοιτό τοι ἔς περ ὀπίσσω
Ὄλβος, ἀτὰρ μὲν νῦν γε κακοῖς ἔχεαι πολέεσσι.

Perhaps, when things are all open and in order, nothing is omitted, no grace of language and of sentiment wanting, as when M. d'Avaux wrote to the Marchioness de Sablé on the

* Souvenirs contemporains, vol. i. p. 93.

death of her son, the Marquis de Laval*. And yet what does that eloquent comforting amount to? Nothing. 'Tis as if you thought that the chirping of a wren, by crying comfort from a hollow breast, could chase away the first-conceived sound. Yet your want, let the fact from which it originated be what it might, was urgent; your expectations, let the premises have been ever so unhappy, rational; for it is rational to believe in God's mercy where there is no pure malice to render impossible its action. To supply that want there must be something existing in the universe, for nothing is without an object. That hope in itself was not merely and absolutely fond, for no human hope is wholly so, as Silvius says,

"Wherever sorrow is, relief would be."

We must believe, therefore, that there is somewhere a certain unknown sympathy, unlike what mortals yield and feel, something which we call sympathy from the poverty of language wanting a term for it, a power which can really relieve, which can only be done by removing the cause. God alone possesses this attribute; He alone can give ὅττι μάλιστ' ἐθέλεις, He alone, without infringing justice, can do it; and what is more, He does it every day. If you doubt it, demand of that weeping mother, or of that dying girl, and she will tell you that she has known all this verified to the letter in her heart. Using a river symbol, we with the ancients may say therefore of their affecting aspirations at the close of their life on earth, "it is the chant of the swan!" Pythagoras called it a song of joy, by which this bird, after its long existence in this world, congratulates itself on the prospect of passing to a better life. We see then how resignation, by a certain right and just and natural process, so to speak, sends us all, however quietly and secretly, to the love of God,—to the deep, intimate, however secret, love of Him who has compassion on the human frailty, who makes allowance for ignorance, for circumstances, for differences undiscernible to the eye of the world, and who judges with a mercy that, as Christ proclaimed by his actions, knows of no limitation but those which the heart itself is obliged to recognize as just.

* Cousin, Mde. de Sablé, 26.

We may conclude, therefore, in the remarkable words of the introit for Septuagesima, and say, "circumdederunt me gemitus mortis et in tribulatione mea invocavi Dominum, et exaudivit vocem meam. Diligam te, Domine, fortitudo mea; Dominus firmamentum meum et refugium meum et liberator meus."

To be resign'd to life's keen sorrow,
Poor man must have in view a morrow;
But morrows, such as we desire,
Exist alone in regions higher
Than this chequer'd passing scene,
Where are such vexations seen.
All creatures, as we know, one day
Will fail us, or quite pass away.
But God will never so depart,
Since 'tis his breath that moves our heart.
Without, within, about, for ever,
Abandon us, we know He'll never.
Then, when we enter sorrow's shade
And feel the gloom that death has made,
We waken up to know our centre
Was God, through whom all bliss must enter.
And so to love Him must be still
The tender impulse of our will;
Directed with a sage employ
Of wishes for eternal joy.

We are at the end of our whole category of qualifications proposed as requisite for the enjoyment of serene hours; and it seems to me as if the proposition had been proved with which we set out this morning, and that there is no denying but that every one of them conduces to the end spoken of.

Serene, free, and glad, the wish to pass a day
Promotes thus the love for which the holy pray;
Doubt the mere Poet's word inviting you to bowers,
But this the school teaches in its solemn hours;
Doubt echoes sweet that Paradise recall,
But doubt not Reason's voice—'tis Lessius says it all*.

It remains to proceed to the last division of the final subject

* In his treatise on the Divine Perfections.

prescribed to us, and to observe that reciprocally the love of G
thus working more or less in all relations, and often under cov
of other dispositions, must conduce to the enjoyment of a sere
hour. Indeed this appears so true from the first, that the me
idea of the existence of such love in others produces involu
tarily a certain serene sweetness in the thoughts of those wh
conceive it. Not alone so dignified, so supremely exalted as
have just remarked, but so gracious, so charming, so human
thing in regard to what is loveable is it to love God, that if y
could only fancy all the people you meet in the street—as m
of them really are than some suspect—inspired by it, so as
love God, "I do not say," remarks Lacordaire, "as we love m
but as we love even the lower creatures, a horse, a dog, a
water, light, and heat," the visible scene of the world would
transformed to your eyes into a sort of heaven; while, of cour
men are left without words when it is a question of qualifyi
its effects in those who are conscious of its influence upon the
selves. Chopin, the celebrated composer, wishing to love a
admire a certain celebrated Frenchwoman who had long b
friended him, though a stranger to her studies and researche
and, in the end, to her professed convictions, encased as h
always was, to use her expression when speaking of him, i
the Catholic dogmas, seems to have felt this impression wi
all the fervour and genius of a true artist, as well as of a go
Christian, for she tells us that he used to say of her, "Bah
bah! je suis bien sûre qu'elle aime Dieu!"

But let us proceed to consider the more ordinary causes whic
make evident the connexion between the state of mind whic
we invoke and the divine love.

To attain to the serenity of which we have been rudely tracin
the development, every one has need, in the secret silent depth
of his heart, of being encouraged and supported against thos
vague fears of the future which are incident to our condition i
this world. Every one has need, in the same recesses of hi
inmost nature, of being impressed with a sense of the goodnes
of the power to which he knows himself at present subject; an
he has need of having before the eyes of his mind an ultimat
supreme and perfect object to satisfy his need of loving, which
if not satisfied, would be sufficient alone of itself to ensure hi

misery even in the present life. Now, by supplying these three wants, felt more or less in some way by all of us, it is a simple matter of fact, which no one need be thanked for acknowledging, that the love of God conduces to the power of realizing serene hours. Speculations about the Deity, and philosophic inquiries respecting the First Cause, which you can hardly get us to enter upon, signify but very little where it is a question of allaying those secret instinctive apprehensions of the future to which, whatever may be said, all men, from the mere fact of their possessing conscience and reason as the supreme part of their constitutional nature, are liable. "And yet," as Balzac complains, "this is where many learned and formal people, who disdain as something puerile the idea of our kind of object, too often begin and end their pompous studies." He laments that a chapter of metaphysics should have occupied them more than the great affair of our present happiness and future safety. "In their academies," he says, "they never cease speaking about the idea of the good and the beautiful as if ending with the terms. They fly after a certain imaginary perfection that they think they have seen somewhere. But," he continues, "these are only words and steps lost." He would have us to attend to our own interest, like the unpretending, to seek the good in its personal source, and the beautiful in Him who created it. He would have us seek truth, but in our actions, inspired by the love of Him who is its centre, rather than in our words, which often in a philosophic way leave no room for Him in our hearts. He would have us think more about what may render us eternally happy, and less about what will be to us entirely useless, all the reward for which is the applause of a few philosophers and scholars, and even that contested. What, he would argue, avails all this against the instinctive dread of that hour "when the sentence is foreseen by contemplation, anticipated by terror, confirmed by despair*?" what will it avail when one whom distrust and the utter absence of divine love have engaged in perversity is about to pass away, and, as says the poet after describing the struggle with the Nemæan lion,

"Hades opens to receive a monster soul?"

* Rich. de St. Victor., Erudit. Hom. int. ii. 42.

When that hour comes it will be well, as the French might say applying to this subject one of their favourite expressions, an with which three successive revolutions have familiarized them it will be well to have been for the new master, who will the manifest himself in a novel manner, a friend of the day before "un ami de la veille;" one of those friends whom no one doubts, and who form such a contrast to the innumerable friend of the day after, the "amis du lendemain." "Remember thy Creator," says Richard of St. Victor, "before the bravest men shall tremble, and there will be no work to do at the mill, and the labourers will be idle though their numbers are diminished and they who through fear are accustomed, with closed shutters to look only through their doors, will sit in darkness through fear of opening even them." Such is his commentary on the words which he begins by citing. But suppose that we think of this Almighty Being, of whose existence we are instinctively conscious, as if He were a tyrant who has done nothing for us to merit our love in a natural way, and who will do nothing for us to elicit it in that manner, will the bold opening our doors and windows and remembering Him then add to our serenity? But to remember Him in the sense here intended is to love Him as we should love our best and sweetest friend, between whose heart and ours there was the greatest identity of feeling. It is to look up to Him also as being that Lucifer commemorated on Holy Saturday, that morning star "qui regressus ab inferis humano generi serenus illuxit." It is to feel that we can repeat with the prophet, "Domine, cum iratus fueris, misericordiæ recordaberis*." It is to be armed against fears, not with reckless confidence or insane forgetfulness, but by the love of Him who was such a lover of mercy "that He chose to die," as Nicholas of Clairvaux says, "rather than not show mercy†." And besides, in the midst of life and of all things capable of ministering to happiness, while He remains invisible, difficult for many, if not impossible, would it be to enjoy a serene hour, if the remembrance of some young friends and companions, already gone before us, were not sweetened and appeased by a conviction of the truth and reality of these attributes of God! For

* Habac. cap. 3. † Epist. xl.

alas! how often while thinking of those persons have we to remember frivolity, misapplication of time and of resources, the intoxication of amusement, rash expressions, hasty words, even deceptions perhaps under the pressure of distressful complications or of some strong necessity inducing them! How would such recollections trouble us now, were God to be remembered as if He judged exactly like man, and precisely as we have often ourselves judged one another! But no; "depend upon it," said an aged and holy priest, little aware, by the way, of what I was thinking about when he spoke, "depend upon it that more is forgiven in the next world than in this." The Church on Holy Saturday beseeches God to show his power through all the plenitude of the justified nations by mitigating fears, "et da lætitiam mitigando terrorem; ut omnium peccatis tua remissione deletis, quod denuntiatum est in ultionem, transeat in salutem." Love beholds this prayer fulfilled. It sees fear mitigated; it dissipates the apprehensions of men, by causing them to remember that, as Richard of St. Victor says, "He ministered to them by his death, in which He laboured for them lest they should labour, and bore a temporal, lest they should suffer an eternal pain *." The love of God visibly allays thus the fears of those mourning for departed friends by keeping their attention fixed on the gratuitous nature of the good which He communicates in the future life, the belief in which is so essential a part of Christianity that the Church in her most austere monuments, even when singing the terrible "Dies iræ," takes care to express it, as in the words, "Rex tremendæ majestatis, qui salvandos salvas gratis—redemisti crucem passus, tantus labor non sit cassus."

Such is then, as every one can perceive, the first effect of this love by which man's fears of the future, as regards others and himself, are allayed, and that great obstacle to the enjoyment of thoroughly serene hours arising from them removed. The poet alludes to it in these lines,

"I'll sing the mighty riddle of mysterious love,
Which neither wretched men below, nor blessed spirits above,

* In Cant. Cantic.

With all their comments, can explain,
How all the whole world's life to die did not disdain.

"I'll sing the searchless depths of the compassion divine,
The depths unfathom'd yet
By Reason's plummet and the line of Wit,
Too light the plummet, and too short the line;
How the eternal Father did bestow
His own eternal Son as ransom for his foe.

"I'll sing aloud, that all the world may hear
The triumph of the buried Conqueror;
How Hell was by its pris'ner captive led,
And the great slayer Death slain by the dead."

But even to the common apprehension this is not all. The love of God, people can see clearly enough, conduces to the enjoyment of serene intervals by impressing man with a sense of the goodness of the power to which he knows himself to be at present, as he will be during every instant of his future existence, subject. Without this love the thought, from which he can never wholly escape, of that power, of that high All-seen whom he has dallied with, and who is now actually present to him, is enough to trouble his mind in lightest hours, and discolour all his serenity. "He who saw only the similitude of Christ's glorified humanity fell at his feet as dead. What," exclaims Richard of St. Victor, "if he had beheld the glory of his divinity? How infirm must be the eye of the human heart which, though formed to contemplate divinity, can yet hardly endure to contemplate the similitude of his humanity*!" "The 'ego sum' of Christ," says Balzac, "have nothing potent in appearance. These two words, short, simple, and common, have nothing extraordinary in them, nothing to astonish or to threaten people, nothing to indicate that they are about to strike us prostrate; yet we know the effect that followed from hearing them." But it is evident to any one that love dispels this sort of awe, and reminds those who feel it that if we attend, as Richard of St. Victor says, "to the heart of Christ, nothing can be conceived sweeter, nothing more benign, that no other heart

* In Apocalyps. i. 4.

was ever or can ever be more abundant in sweetness*." "He feeds us, in fact," continues this great voice, "with the milk of his humanity, as well as with the honey of his divinity,—that honey which we are told comes from heaven's own blessed air, descending from on high, and exceeding all sweetness†." What are all the sons of men in regard to that which is even expected from them but only so many poor truant and very backward children? Well, every one can perceive that the love of God must impress minds with a sense of the happiness of our privilege in having to render an account only to such an examiner, and therefore, in a high mystic strain, Richard of St. Victor adds, as if foreseeing the desire of premature culture, and of a perfection which few attain to, which in our times produces often such mournful results, "O that it were given me to have a master of this kind, who would not so much wound as heal his disciples, not so much torment as soothe, like Him whose unction teacheth us all things! Hitherto I have had masters who do not instruct the mind until they have first lacerated the flesh. Alas! sufficient were the wounds made by robbers who despoiled me, leaving me half dead! But, lo! these hard masters lay iniquity upon iniquity, adding wounds to wounds, selling words for stripes. Let them depart, these doctors of ours, yea, these exactors, our true torturers, vain and insane, teaching and despising‡." Then, passing to symbolic images, this representative of the love of God can find nothing more apt to compare our Almighty Lord with than a flower,—even so, a flower, than which, as we all know, from the highest to the poorest and lowliest, nothing is more acceptable, nothing more prized even as a lover's gift. "'Flos Filius ejus.' O, how well is He called a flower! for what more beautiful! what more fragrant! From the flower you have honey and wax, food and drink—all medicinal. What more soft than a flower when it is touched? more tender when handled, more gentle when gathered, more light when carried, more beautiful when beheld, more fragrant when smelt, more useful when its properties are considered? Such is the Son of the Virgin. For He who to the unbeliever and pre-

* In Cant. Cantic. lib. ii. 21. † De Emman. ii. 23.
‡ In Ps. cxviii.

varicator, through their own choice, is a stone of offence and rock of scandal, is to those who adhere to Him through hop and love a flower,—soft as regards anger, tender to compassion gentle to lenity, quite unfit, inapt, good for nothing as we migh say, when it is a question of punishment. Even so is He de lightful to converse with, fragrant in promises, useful by remu neration, incapable of giving pain, impressionable in regard t pity, gentle in gifts, light in precepts, beautiful in examples and fruitful in reward. There's medicine for redeeming, food and drink for justifying, honey and wax for glorifying thos who attain by means of it to the health of sempiternal incor ruption in life and felicity for ever*."

Thus must it be evident to every one who reflects for a singl instant that the love of God contributes to serene hours by im pressing men with a sense of the goodness, the affability, so t speak, the loveable sweetness, the floral charm, if one migh use such a term, of the Omnipotent Being, to whom they ar all subject at present and for ever. The common flower we all wear at our breasts; what it represents has for its proper resting-place the human heart. No doubt without that love people can go forth upon the river, and land upon the meadow and walk through the garden, and discourse with stateliness and gravely as they may please, and moralize, and philosophize and invoke conventionalisms and even God's own law, as distinct from the love and mercy which will interpret it, or else go on to solace themselves with talk about poetry and humanity, and all that,—no one denies it; but a serene hour in the deep re cesses of the soul is a different thing, and not to be obtained without that element which constitutes for every one of us the principle of all peace.

In fine, without pretending to be wiser than our neighbours, we can perceive that the love of God must conduce to the end proposed during these excursions by supplying every one with an ultimate supreme and absolutely perfect object to satisfy the want of loving that belongs to human nature. The subject has often before occurred to us, but we must here more directly recur to it. "When I reflect on my affections," says Lacordaire,

* De Comparatione Christi.

writing to a young friend, "they seem to me not to diminish the almost invincible attraction which draws me towards a stronger and more penetrating love. Even in friendship the infinite is wanting. The senses separate us in many points from those whom we love most; and it is only in heaven that our arms will find that object which we can for ever hold locked in their embraces." Perhaps some grave man or other does not think that fellows with oars in their hands feel the need of such an object. He is mistaken, however. We all know, as Sir Moth Interest says, "the soul of man is infinite in what it covets. Who desireth knowledge, desires it infinitely; who covets honour, covets it infinitely; who longs for a happy day, longs for it infinitely. It would be no hard thing even for a coveting man to prove or to confess that he aims at infinite wealth." Well, the present world being nothing, when a man loves what he knows to be the true wisdom, the true honour, the true happy day, the true riches, he must needs have realized serenity for himself; and this is what our crew stands in need of as well as any class; and as for love itself, though in this life we often love others more for their faults, still this only arises from the circumstance that these faults are deemed an approximation to greater perfection than their absence would involve; and, moreover, both they and all the world are in the position of our friend who relates his tour as the consequence of that sense; they are in habits of falling in love, they must love; but hence, as most people know, there is a wide issue to all that is antagonistic to serenity. Even supposing things to run smooth with them, which some even say never is the case, as every picture needs a background, so, if you have nothing in life while you are loving, and rowing, or riding, or sauntering along, that is ultimate to fix your mental eyes upon, the sparkling waves, and the groves, and the violets, and even the pretty faces of your foreground will lose their charm in a way to appal you, or even lose their very meaning. You will see them as brute animals see them, and nothing more, which is not the way to enhance at the moment their beauty or your contentment. "Who can describe," says Richard of St. Victor, "the variations of human affection? In many ways it changes, and according to each alternation of its changes it relaxes its impetus by innumerable ways, from one

thing to another, always altering, getting tired of one thing after another, and returning with avidity to that which it before disdained. Solomon, therefore, says of it, 'Lustrans universa in circuitu pergit spiritus, et in circulos suos revertitur.' Just so; for since it never finds sufficient delight, it passes from one thing to another, now this, now that loving, and so describing its circles for ever*." "O, how happy is the man," he exclaims elsewhere, "to whom it is given to soothe the perturbations of the heart and the tempests of sadness, and compose to peace these great and wonderful swellings of the sea! One thing I know, without daring to doubt of it, that so long as love is merely scattered towards many objects, and unable to soar above them, it is never led to perfect peace, or made serene to true security. O unhappy mind, how solicitous and troubled about many things, while one thing is necessary, that is, the love of Him on whom you should fix your affections with that supreme ultimate desire which all the while is so far from being incompatible with a human love for those with whom you are in relation in this life that it could not exist without it!" The fact, the common painful fact, if you will, as Balzac too remarks, is this: "that we embrace in this world certain objects which glide and melt away between our hands—which are constantly threatened with an end or a change; we are sure either to hate later or to love no longer; their nature being to begin to corrupt immediately after their production, the affection which we feel for them must necessarily diminish; that desire must end in distaste, and that motion in lassitude. Let us, then," he says, in conclusion, "direct our passion to objects that can be always loved." There is, in a certain sense, for which we are ourselves alone responsible, in most things under the sun, what may be called vanity. No one can justly say otherwise. Nevertheless Christianity would have rendered a very sad and dubious service to the world in disabusing it of all that it directly and immediately, though in an inordinate and in a human way loves, if it had not proposed to it something greater, equally accessible, and more worthy of love, while not exclusive of what is lower, or if it had been satisfied with leaving it for sole com-

* De Statu Interioris Hominis, i. c. 9.

fort the proud proposition of the philosopher: "ut officii fructus sit ipsum officium *." But, in this respect, it has not failed; for it only says with the poet,

> "Be strong to love, O heart!
> Love knows not wrong.
> Didst thou love—creatures even,
> Life were not long;
> Didst thou love God in heaven
> Thou wouldst be strong †!"

and accordingly, the fact is, that most people in the old common normal condition of Christianized humanity love God a great deal more than they think they do. If you ask how one comes to this conclusion, one might answer you without much difficulty. Take, for instance, any of these persons in the moment of performing some office of kindness or general goodness, great or small. Suppose that the thoughts of this person, however little devout at the same instant, are suddenly turned to the idea of our Lord in his ineffable condescension deigning to require and accept it as rendered to Himself. Well, you will find that this image brought involuntarily before the mind, while there is great care to say nothing about it, changes the whole character of the action, as far as this person who was performing it is concerned. Agreeable before, as all acts of kindness are, it now proves something more that one cannot describe excepting by saying that one feels a sort of cold shudder, with a certain sweetness that surpasses all the pleasures of this life. Moreover, "if you look attentively on this earth, where God, many are inclined to say sometimes, seems so perfectly forgotten, you will find," as even a woman remarks ‡, "that it is for Him, after all, there is most fidelity, and the greatest and most constant love." He is the Bridegroom whom many, without the rules of any religious order, or incurring any of the obligations resulting from submission to them, but by their good fathers and mothers, and sweethearts and spouses'

* Cicero, De Fin. ii.

† Proctor.

‡ Madame Swetchine.

leave, are always in the way to meet;—before whom, as Juliana says,

> "While you stand a competitor, you fall
> To atoms."

No doubt it is strictly right and conformable to human nature that it should be so; for, in the first place, it is not only reasonable, as Butler remarks, but natural to be affected with a presence, though it be not the object of our senses. If removed from us, we can recall it to our mind and be moved by it as if it suits us. And must He who is so intimately with us, that in Him we live, and move, and have our being, be thought too distant to be the object of our affections? And, in the second place, when in the love of God we find by an act of mind and of strength the object of our ultimate and highest affections, we only act in strict accordance with the interest of that passion itself; for even love, this poor impulse which so pervades our being in every form, requires as much from every one of us. It requires it for the twofold reason, that at first might seem to imply a contradiction, demanding this through a sense that is forced upon people of the unpleasant imperfections of individuals, and through the greatness, the intensity, the infinity, even when ordinate, of their love for the race to which they belong. The sense of imperfection disagreeably existing in the former is imparted in spite of themselves. They may struggle long against it, invent a million of conceits to ward it off, but come it will at last; to be sure, they may be said to set out without much prospect of success; for who could think of loving himself? Who could even endure to think of himself for five consecutive minutes? With regard to our estimate of others, of course, it is different. We can love them long, as long as our mortality endures, and think of them long, even to our latest breath; and all the while the farther they are off from us, the more intense is our love for them; but still, if these loved ones were to be always as at present, and we alone with them to the exclusion of all others—not for ever. No, even in a youthful dream people would feel that such a state would be impossible. Even during the season of first love, there must to the most im-

passioned lovers be absence at times for the ideal to have fair play and for them to work upon it. They are directed therefore by a voice within them heard by no ear unless their own to pass on to the desire of that undecaying beauty and unchanging goodness, and absolute perfection in the constant presence of which, as St. Augustine says, "you need not fear that you cannot for ever praise Him whom you can for ever love*." God is moreover present to us in some respects as a human friend is present; for the latter even is not always within reach of the senses. But He is present in a still more intimate way, since He is the sustainer of our being while we exist in Him. But let us dwell longer here; for I see angry though becoming looks kindled at the allusion to faults in others; and it would be deplorable if, after all our expeditions together, we were to part at the last in bad humour. Let us address a few suggestions to those who are for doubting the facts to which we ascribe this great result. In the first place, I suppose it will be owned that there are instances to be found in the world of inconstancy. Not to allude to the half-comic side of the matter; as when, in consequence of the viperous tongue of some old slanderer,

> "The plighted lovers who used to walk
> Refused to meet and declined to talk;
> And wish'd for two moons to reflect the sun,
> That they mightn't look together on one,"—

I say, without invoking any memories of this kind, which Hood, as in this instance, by leaving us hope of reconciliation, contrives to invest with a true poetic charm, there are occasions frequently presented in real life when the words that fly to the lips are such as bespeak bitter experience, like those of the old minstrelsy,—

> "O waly, waly, gin love be bonny,
> A little time while it is new;
> But when it is auld, it waxeth cauld,
> And fades awa' like morning dew."

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* Serm. xxi. in Ps. 83, Nov. Patr. Biblioth. a Card. Maio edita, tom. 1.

Madame de Sablé, to a former friend, who had of late neglected her, writes, saying, "I must discourse by letter with you on the misery and nothingness of the world. Never was there a friendship that seemed better established than ours—mutual esteem, mutual pleasure, reciprocal confidence—and yet without any thing having occurred to shake these foundations, you have abandoned me. Is not that a grave example of human weakness? I speak so designedly; for I would rather blame the human race than you in particular. I only comprise you in it and lament the nothingness of this nature which, even in the best, is so defective. Your way of proceeding in my regard is a grave proof of it; for having no reasons to excuse yourself, you have not even sought to have the least appearance of reason on your side. You have simply left me*." Who has not experienced in some degree or other those moments of anguish when struggling hope casts a flash of light across the deep gloom of a wounded heart, trying to reassure it, against its own convictions, of being frustrated of its aim, when its possessor finds himself in an altered relation with some one that he once thought loved him?—momentary gleam truly! succeeded by still blacker darkness; though while it lasts inducing him to reason with himself in the sensible familiar way of that poor father when refused admittance on the ground of those whom he trusted in being ill. Of course at first there is the burst of indignation,—

> "Deny to speak with me? They are sick?
> Mere revolt.
> Fetch me a better answer. Tell the hot
> Duke, that ————."

But then there is the gleam, indicated by what follows,—

> "No, but not yet;—may be, he is not well;
> Infirmity doth still neglect all office
> Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves
> When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind
> To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;
> And am fallen out with my more headier will."

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* Cousin, M. de Sablé, 54.

Such are the resources to which "friends," and even perhaps sons and nearest relatives reduce some, till unquestionable facts cause them to feel cut to the brain, and left without a twig for the self-delusions of hope to cling to. But you say very truly that these provocations, carried to this extent, are very uncommon. All friends, we feel inclined to exclaim naturally enough, act not so. True; but if you will believe the poet who merely sums up the experience of every age, for the affection of even lovers to endure it must be renewed from time to time by quarrels: or, as he says, by their falling out with each other; he does not add to comfort us, that in every instance even this wise expedient proves effectual. Then, again, generally, I presume, it will be granted that characters change sometimes for what appears to others to be the worse, let them have been originally what they may. This, indeed, is a little familiar circumstance that in our times forces itself upon the observation of those most disposed to love others. Perhaps, in most cases, this is an eventuality which can be traced to the present state of civilization with regard to the higher and middle classes, rejecting what is divinely provided as an antidote; for certainly there are states of society in which it is less perceptible; and possibly at all times the poor, and those of whom great society never hears, are less liable to it; but as the world goes around us here, no one can be blind to the fact alluded to. See how many men, at least, for it is in a way that women never do, alter in their manners disagreeably, as they advance in life. That God who reads them still loves them, one may be most willing to believe, for we can't read circumstantial consequences; that they may even, in a way unseen by us, be making a progress towards the life which is to be developed in them later visibly may be conceded; but for the moment they are in a transition state, which often proves to our eyes rather an unpleasant thing for others to consort with,—reminding one of the reply of Auber the composer to some one who complained of the misery of growing old,—"Yes, it is very tiresome to grow old; though, for all that, it is the only method as yet discovered of having a long life." However, as it is, at present the aroma which attracted you to them in their earlier years seems gone; and that which human affection at present

demands for its nourishment is, in their actual condition, not s discernible as one might desire. So far from its being still foun in them, you might fancy at times that instead of endearing and estimable qualities they had nothing left but wrinkles in the heart, freezing of the blood, dimness of vision in regard to the poesy which is the charity of life, stiffness of the inner man, ingratitude, distrust, and forsaking of early bonds, and the loss of all power to think favourably of others; you might imagine, from hearing their usual reflections, that their only religious duty consisted now in counting the years that they and you have lived without expressing the least consciousness of any noble onward impulse; though our old poet says expressly,

"The vicious count their years, virtuous their acts."

You might suppose, from observing some of their habits, that they had contracted a vulgar love for money, perhaps for good eating and drinking, for their own ease and comfort as they call it; in short, that they had taken their last vows to worldliness, and had resigned themselves to every feeling of which serene hours demand the absence. You might, in your discouragement, be inclined to think that as far as relates to any pleasure you can derive from intercourse with them, they were, in fact, no longer worth knowing. No doubt, as already remarked, all men have not to suffer this state of transition, which is so liable at least to be misinterpreted and misunderstood; but when the presence of the phenomenon does strike you, it would not be easy perhaps to point out any source of more painful impressions. Well, God, at all events, we are conscious has no transition state. He does not change thus. To Him alone, as Œdipus says, old age belongs not,—adding, too absolutely for us to agree to,—"but every thing else does all-powerful time confound." There's the true loveable, constant, generous, forgiving, secret friend, the poet *κατ' ἐξοχήν*. When your hairs turn grey, He, though the Ancient of days, is still the same—the God of your childhood and of your youth—the same who wished you to be what all generous young fellows are—to despise false prudence, and to abhor selfishness, and to wring your friend's fingers nearly off by shaking hands with him, and to love and to serve, and to woo and to win. Now it must conduce greatly

Serene enjoyment to be conscious of remembering Him as s[illegible], and of keeping friends with Him on the old terms. If it [illegible]otherwise with us, we are all conscious that it won't be his [illegible]lt. We know that He assumes no new character in regard [illegible]us. He is ever, as it were, young and making young, and [illegible]piring the young—"Tu autem idem ipse es."

In fine, the intensity of affection for the race, for the ideal, [illegible] the type, and in countless instances, when its normal state [illegible]seen, for the reality of mankind, worked out before our eyes in [illegible]millions around us, can only attain serenity by means of the [illegible].e [illegible] God;—if real, and not feigned, it proves a torture else. or l[illegible] us attend a moment. What is horrible in the thought [illegible]' d[illegible] th—without referring to what it becomes not us to sug[illegible]est, [illegible]-is the thought of leaving the human race, of no more [illegible]ein[illegible] man or woman, boy or girl. We know, even in hours [illegible]t apart for pleasure, that this day of apparent leave-taking of [illegible]ur fellow-creatures will come, when we shall have to remove [illegible].ence, to all appearance solitary, and see no more the mortal [illegible]generations with which we were so delighted. But, if people [illegible]ove God, this thought will not interrupt the delight of their [illegible]erene hours; for their fears, and even their regrets, will then be [illegible]greatly modified, if not wholly dissipated. They will feel, then, [illegible]hat they will only have to remove to Him who made the race [illegible]f creatures for whom they have such a deep and passionate, [illegible]nd yet ever growing affection—that they have only to pass to [illegible]Him who loved them and died for them—that they have to [illegible]repair to Him from whose thought and will that race originated; [illegible]n whom they really exist with all their genuine attributes; to [illegible]Him who every day and every moment protects them, and [illegible]watches over them, in the tempest, in the calm, in the pesti[illegible]ence, in the sunshine, in the agony, and in the pleasure, too; [illegible]hey will feel that they have only to remove to Him who has [illegible]declared expressly, as if to shame all who should attempt to [illegible]misrepresent Him, that He delights to be playing every day [illegible]nd at all times, playing on the orb of earth, and that it is [illegible]is delight to be with the children of men—to Him, in fine, [illegible]who wills that they shall live with Him in heaven, which means [illegible]a bliss beyond what we can conceive, eternally in love, as we [illegible]can only at present say passionately, yet for all its passion,

eternally happy, and while wanting no energy or food for its exercise eternally serene.

It was said from the first, that one object of our rambles was to find out "what made joy to last." It was with that moral that our argument began. In truth nothing is worth very much that does not last, as the daughter of Saturio in the Persian of Plautus says, "Every thing that was, do I consider as nothing, since it was, and is not now." "To me, those two words, 'it was,'" says a modern poet, developing the same thought, "have a strange unearthly music—a solemn and sad tone—a deep meaning—too deep for tears, and far too deep for words. As I sit and think, and picture to myself the happy hours I have spent, there rises before mine eyes a mist—the mist of unshed tears, and from out that mist a voice whispers, 'it was*.'" Yet, surely man's joy was intended to last; there was to be no "it was" for him. You cannot suppose that his joy was designed to finish with one or two fading moments' mirth, a few serene hours of sunshine or of moonlight. Well, I confess it seems to me, that by attending to what others have said who were well worth listening to, the engagement undertaken has been fulfilled to the letter, that, thanks to their directions, the whole art has been discovered, and made a simple and plain business whereby any one can in a very quiet, simple way realize this object, and secure to himself a serenity which is not to be associated, even in expression, with hours, since it will endure, when all our revels shall be ended, when time itself shall be no longer, when, as the great poet says,

> "The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
> And, like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind."

As there seems to be nothing else to add, the speakers and listeners may be imagined rising from the green bank, jumping into the boat, resuming their oars, and that too, with a clatter that echoed along the river, as if they wanted to signify by the abrupt noise, that there was to be an entire breaking off in their

* Hood.

conversation, and that if any one did say any thing else during the remainder of this last day's excursion, it was to be without reference to any thing that had passed, but just as the fancy might take him to rattle on with some jargon or other; or, as they used to say in old French, "dire sa râtelée," which meant simply, that he might say whatever came into his head with full liberty, unless, indeed, like witty Biron, he should feel inclined, in allusion to all that is past, to utter such words as "this is not so well as I looked for, but the best that ever I heard."

The return home may be supposed effected without any atmospheric disaster; but, as we were told this morning, it would not be wise to prolong these expeditions much later. Here they must end, if it were for no other reason than that we did not wish to see verified that highly objectionable passage, as we are bound to call it, of a celebrated author, in which he says, "With all respect for the opinion of society in general, and cutter clubs in particular, we humbly suggest that some of the most painful reminiscences in the mind of every individual who has occasionally disported himself on the Thames, must be connected with his aquatic recreations." Here must close, then, our disputations in the open air, on the river, and in the fields and gardens,

> "For now the season of rain is nigh,
> The sun is dim in the thickening sky,
> And the clouds in sullen darkness rest
> Where he hides his light at the doors of the west;
> I hear the howl of the wind that brings
> The long drear storm on its heavy wings."

In a week or two, when wet feet will be common every where, and colds not scarce though off the river, we should have to warm ourselves at a fire in the boat-house before embarking, a sort of prelude that would indicate with sufficient clearness that it was high time to think about laying up oars themselves under some roof or other.

> "———— Time may
> For all his wisdom yet give us a day."

But though in a different sense, and for other reasons, one may

adopt the maxim of Ariosto, and decide on being always the last to go out of a boat, and though there may be once or twice such a thing as having to pull back against a piercing wind, and in damp raw darkness, when, while calling the weather splendid, taller men than any of us here will take cold, as Grumio says, which, by the way, is not a bad preparation for enjoying the comforts of a warm house at nightfall, there is no occasion to make mention of such sequels here as there was no conversation then possible, except what consisted of mutual encouragement to bear up against what Chaucer calls the "desperance of the firmament;"—in fact, if the truth must be known, there are moments of discomfort on the river, as our merry friend suggests, though not without a certain pleasure, even at the time, as I must maintain, in spite of him; but for all that, such, as I grant, one does not lose the sense of in a hurry, retaining it, in fact, when all is well, and one is tucked up comfortably in bed, and as Homer would say, even, "in one's dreams."

You have, my reader, to speak in Ciceronian style, what I collected from divers authors, ancient and modern, respecting serene hours, which you will either follow, if you approve of it, or proceed to seek from your own stores of thought, if you feel interested in the subject. I have poured out before you, as the Roman orator would say, all that I could think of in relation to them, which, on my own account, I must add, any one else taken from what circle you pleased, might have suggested better, no doubt, than I have done. I have regarded you from the beginning as one acute, but not occupied; as a man who, at times, has a taste for the sort of food that was to be offered to him, and even, occasionally, so hungry for it, that I preferred protracting our discussions every day until the twilight, as it were, which we may suppose to have been each time still "hush'd on purpose to grace harmony," rather than suffer him to depart not satiated. Though we were in general far from having in our skiff either a Callimachus or a Heraclitus, who used to talk thus on and on, as some one also is accused of doing, I remember how often "we have made the sun to set in talking;" for, as Maurice de Guérin said, when complaining of his excursion for six leagues being too short, "conversation is one of those things that we always like to prolong." Were I,

in conclusion, in the way of an epilogue, to pass over in review again the different qualifications which seemed requisite for the realization of our object, we should probably only scare and astonish those who most possess them; and the first child that heard me would exclaim, as a little girl actually did, when shown a sort of sketch of the matter, "What! do you mean to say that we had all that with us in the boat the day we were so happy?" But it seems to me, for all her scepticism, that we have not been directed to insist on any thing that was not absolutely necessary, or that, in fact, she did not herself possess while in that same boat, though one may admit that the comrades who are most eligible on such occasions are not more conscious than she was of what has contributed to their own serenity. If, however, what has been required should seem to any one, in respect to all the details suggested, too much to be acknowledged in a direct way or openly professed when talking to others,—and I admit that the subject has been meted out to us, as old Plautus says, "not in a measure, nor yet in a three-fold measure, but in the granary itself;" and I admit, too, that it would spoil all to pretend that our poor swells and their companions went out to glide through reeds and saunter in flower-gardens, for any purpose transcendental,—let him, of course, follow his fancy, and leave or throw away in imagination, to save blushes, which in relation to such matters they are all so given to, what he thinks proper to say may be dispensed with. But this—to resume the grandiose style—I will hold, that the object proposed was at least worthy of no less pains than are taken generally in the acquirement of any other art, and that the secret of all serene enjoyment, from the least to what is infinite, was in the principles—however they came into such heads as ours—that have been here laid down, without excepting any one of them. We all know that they would be sufficient, if followed up by any one, to constitute that highest state of serenity to which we have only alluded from time to time in a diffident and respectful way, as became us; but always, when it is a question of any art or faculty, it is usual, as our orator says, "to seek it in its most absolute and perfect form."

In fine, without more words, I have done what I could, not what I wished; for it is more easy to form an idea of the sub-

ject that was proposed to us, than to confine it within any arbitrary limits, or give it, even in reference to them, adequate expression. Nor is it matter new to us that we come short of our desires, and of that unbodied figure of the thought that gave them surmised shapes; for every action that has gone before of men whom we only, as apes and at a distance follow, did draw bias, and thwart, not answering the aim. To our dear companions, dispersing now for ever, let me imagine addressed, from some worthy lips or other entitled to pronounce a sort of blessing, the Homeric words, "May there be to you all henceforth a sufficiency!" for so one must ask leave to render πλοῦτος, in the last as in the first part taking liberties with the text one quotes from; may there be the love of one another as hitherto; may there be cheerful hours wheresoever you rove, and always, and every where, and above all, abundance of peace. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you! I look on you as one that takes his leave. It would sound somewhat too stately, I am afraid, to finish with the words of Coriolanus, which, besides, might be interpreted two ways, and one of them not exactly complimentary to one's self,

> "My friends of noble touch, when I am forth
> Bid me farewell, and smile;"

though really I do think that another noble dramatist can supply words that would not be wholly inappropriate in finishing this book, of such small pretensions in a direct literary way, for it is said by some one,

> "The world is full of tricks, but it will be
> A trick worth all to have some plaudité
> To these of love and sweet serenity."

THE END.

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